Metanoia

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Metanoia

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Summary

Will blinked, embarrassed suddenly at his lack of verbal response. “I’m afraid I haven't experienced enough to say either way, Doctor,” he replied. “I’m quite a cynic when it comes to matters of the heart.”

“Surely you’re too young for cynicism,” Hannibal replied, amused, and Will ducked his head in such a lovely coy way. Hannibal’s eyes ran over the bruise that both decorated and marred him; just beneath his eye, where the night before his lover had struck him with the back of his hand. He licked his lips and swallowed.

Hannibal frequents underground bondage and torture clubs called Hellfire Clubs, when he's not pretending to be happily married to his socialite wife and living the high life. One evening, he sees the torment of a beautiful young man there, who inexplicably shows up at one of his parties just a few days later. So begins the affair between Hannibal Lecter and Will Graham, a young man in an abusive and controlling relationship with a man who thinks only of himself, his profits, and how much he can make Will hurt without killing him.

Notes

Be wary of the warnings!! There *is* a lot of non-con here, but it is *not* between Hannibal and Will, it is between Will and OMCs. For one chapter, it gets pretty graphic so we will warn for it there, otherwise we promise that Hannigram are sweet and lovely to each other throughout.

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

Hannibal enjoyed deviance as much as the next privileged individual. He went to the clubs men he knew went to, never spoke of it as others did not, and took his pleasure there when he went. His wife cared little for what he did, as long as he didn't bring scandal back to their door, and he was thankful for her lack of curiosity.

In truth, he cared as little about who she chose to spend her time with as he did for her.

They had a mutually uninspired arranged marriage.

Often, Hannibal would go just to watch. The sight of boys suffering drew his blood to a lovely boil and filled his cock thick. Often, it was enough to watch the torment and stroke himself to it. Sometimes, he treated himself to a boy he himself hurt.

He rarely indulged in the torture publicly, he preferred to take his boys to a room and fuck them in private; their sweet tears for him alone.

This night, a lovely lithe young thing was the center of attention, skin already flogged pink by a leather flogger, a cane adding welts here and there on trembling thighs. The boy's tormentor stood before him, now, fingers pressing so hard to the boy's cheeks Hannibal was certain they would leave marks. When he let the boy go, the slap that struck him resonated throughout the room.

The boy's shivered little cry followed like a whisper after.

He was sweat-slick, damp curls pushed back from a pale, youthful face. The shadow of a bruise was healing across one cheek, and his cock hung ruddy and full between reddened thighs. At a whispered command, the boy pushed up onto his toes, fingers gripping tight to the ropes that bound him to the rafters.

"Would anyone else like a try?" As Hannibal watched, the man paced before his audience, smiling wickedly. "He was warned about his behavior thrice this week, and my wrist tires."

So the boy belonged to him full time, and not just here amongst dim lamps and the thick haze of alcohol. Hannibal could admit to a certain tinge of jealousy; he had the means to take a permanent lover, but never the inclination to keep any who had warmed his bed. This creature, leanly muscled and yet delicate, who shuddered but stayed silent as a stranger removed their belt, was a thing of beauty.

The man from the crowd tossed the boy's lover a coin and folded over his belt.

"Five for the price you've paid, but take an extra on the house." When the boy closed his eyes and whined, his lover backhanded him. This time, the boy was silent. "Take a seventh," his lover said, "for his backtalk."

The strike of leather on skin echoed, and Hannibal watched the boy fold his lip between his teeth, eyes scrunched tight, as he took them masterfully. By the second tears were slipping from closed lids. By the fourth he was whimpering once more, lips parted as a tear trembled on the top one, moved by his breath. It dropped with the fifth whip, and the boy jerked in pain, toes sliding over the ground as he tried to find his footing once more. The sixth was delivered to the soles of his feet, causing him to yelp and tuck his knees up, hanging for just a moment on his wrists alone.

The seventh was given at the front, leaving an angry red mark across the boy's belly, having hit his cock hard.

Tears ran freely down the boy's face now, but to his credit the only sounds he made were punished breaths pushed harsh through his gritted teeth. He didn't cry out or beg, he shook.

When his lover touched him again, the boy turned his face into his own arm, doing his best to avoid the falsely soft fingers.

"That's better. You need constant reminders of what a brat you are, so you learn how to behave in civilized society, don't you?"

It took another slap to draw the boy's voice forth, and Hannibal had to close his own eyes as he heard it, weak and lilting, yet so gentle and warm.

"Yes, Sir. Thank you for teaching me."

His lover pushed their foreheads together, a mockery of an intimate gesture. There was less affection there than there was condescension, Hannibal noted, but the boy made no noise of complaint.

"Sessions of 30 minutes to an hour," the man informed the crowd. "Prices are doubled if you'd like to return him marked."

"Or we can have one of the other desperate things here for free," someone complained. The boy flinched, but his lover only smiled.

"You can," he said, "but none of them can take what my boy can."

Hannibal's fingers itched for his coin purse, if only to take a closer look at tearful blue eyes. He controlled himself, turning away. He'd never needed to rent his company before, and he wouldn't start now.

Bedelia had begged off, claiming a headache. Truly, Hannibal knew she merely despised social functions such as these. Everyone milling about discussing their fortunes over brandy and bread, striking the same business deals week by week, forging connections with men who all sounded the same, the wives sharing the same gossip.

This week, though, a change: off in the corner, Hannibal saw blue eyes with a blossoming bruise and a split lip beneath. The boy looked all the lovelier for the color it brought him, and

for the way his curls fell around his face when cleaned and combed.

He stood alone, the man who had so brutally hurt him and so heartlessly loaned him not in sight, and cradled a crystal glass of champagne he hadn't touched. The bubbles had lifted from the drink, warmed by the boy's palm against the glass. He was inconceivably lovely. Hannibal allowed himself some moment just to watch him, the way he blinked slowly, lashes long and curled, the way he flicked his hair from his face when it fell too near his eyes.

The young man worried his lip between his teeth and winced when the motion drew blood again, bringing a fingertip to press to it to stem the flow.

Hannibal couldn't resist, then, in approaching.

"I don't think I've had the pleasure," he said, coming to stand at a respectful distance. He hadn't raised his voice but even being addressed seemed to startle the boy before he soothed himself with a cool ingenuine smile.

"Pardon my rudeness, I lost myself in daydreams," the young man replied. His voice was just as soft as the night before, and Hannibal wished for just a moment that it trembled now as it had then. But even without that he sounded soft and sincere. "Will Graham. I don't often attend such lavish events, but I came at the behest of a… a friend."

"I shall have to thank them for convincing you," Hannibal replied, keeping his expression neutral as the boy's eyelids twitched, just barely narrowing his eyes before he blinked. "Doctor Hannibal Lecter," he introduced himself in turn. The young man's expression changed from cool indifference to slightly taken aback.

"Doctor Lecter, of course. I should have recognized you from your portrait above the mantle," Will's cheeks colored briefly and he ducked his head. "My mind is clearly not with me this evening, I'm sorry, Doctor."

Hannibal shook his head. "The portrait is a beastly thing. My wife had it commissioned, and when it arrived looking as it did, rather than turn it away she had it hung with pride. She likes an occasional joke, I'm afraid."

"The key to a happy marriage," Will mused. He drew the glass to his lips and seemed startled to find the drink flat. How long had he lingered, alone, along the walls?

"Indeed," Hannibal said softly, "That, and a mutually respected desire to be left completely alone."

Will hid a laugh in the cuff of his sleeve. "Careful, good sir. One would think you unfeeling towards your wife."

"On the contrary, I love her all the more the less I see her, and she feels much the same. Ours is a long-standing, beneficial friendship."

"It seems that everyone these days has so little love for their situation." After a moment, the boy flushed a lovely shade of scarlet. "My apologies, Doctor, I'm regularly told I should

think more thoroughly before I speak."

On the contrary, Hannibal found his bluntness unfathomably refreshing. “Love is a luxury for the poor, I’m afraid. For the rest of us, marriage is a business transaction. Affection is reserved for more… *intimate* friendships.”

Will made a sound akin to a laugh, a forceful puff of air, before he swallowed his champagne in one long pull. He said nothing, Hannibal noted, on the matter. Not affectionate, then, with the man who so tormented him. No pleasure at the thought of him either. Curious.

Hannibal licked his lips. “You disagree?”

Will blinked, embarrassed suddenly at his lack of verbal response. “I’m afraid I haven't experienced enough to say either way, Doctor,” he replied. “I’m quite a cynic when it comes to matters of the heart.”

“Surely you’re too young for cynicism,” Hannibal replied, amused, and Will ducked his head in such a lovely coy way. Hannibal’s eyes ran over the bruise that both decorated and marred him; just beneath his eye, where the night before his lover had struck him with the back of his hand. He licked his lips and swallowed.

“Is it melancholy to suggest I have seen many unkind things to bring this about?” Will answered, this time he did smile as he looked up at Hannibal through his lashes. He flicked a curl from his face again in a distracted gesture and glanced down to his empty glass. Hannibal lifted his fingers to call over an attendant, and Will gratefully accepted another glass.

“That’s a pity.”

“That’s reality,” Will said. He sipped this glass much sooner than he had the previous; he seemed far more pleased with the bubbles. “Affection is a rare and precious thing. Many of us haven’t the time or the means to risk ourselves for hope of it.”

“And so we settle,” Hannibal said. “We take the best that we can find for ourselves.”

“Or we take what we need,” Will suggested.

A dependence, then, keeping him with his lover. No fondness that might keep him from a dalliance with Hannibal, and if his lover was so keen to share him, he was unlikely to protest.

Or perhaps more than a dalliance. Will was so far intelligent and well spoken, and Hannibal had more than fair means with which to support him, if affection should bloom. Bedelia would certainly welcome another outlet for Hannibal’s boredom; she often despaired of his reclusiveness beyond the occasional party.

“William.”

Will’s lover had found them, sidling up to their corner with a glass which, by the smell, was one too many. He offered Hannibal a charmingly polite smile; Hannibal returned it with his

own practiced skill.

“You shouldn’t monopolize our host so, William.” To Hannibal, he added, “My apologies. He’s very new to such affairs.”

Will, Hannibal noticed, made no move to defend himself, only a deferential nod towards Hannibal.

“Not at all,” Hannibal replied, eyes still on Will as he addressed the newcomer. “I approached young Mr. Graham to introduce myself. I haven’t had the pleasure.”

“Yes, well,” the man shrugged, the languid too-expressive mannerisms of the near-drunk. “It’s rare he joins me for social gatherings. I’m mentoring him, you see, before he heads to university to read history. His father asked me to help convince him to read law instead.”

“And are you convincing?” Hannibal asked politely, eyes to Will again, who looked like his expression had been carved out of wax and stuck to his face.

“I can be very persuasive,” the man laughed. Hannibal remembered vaguely that the man’s name was Richard and he was heir to something or other. Insufferable and rich, as everyone else.

Almost everyone.

“Besides,” Richard continued, setting a hand between Will’s shoulders, which made him straighten up and tense almost painfully. “The boy must learn social graces if he’s to be accepted as one of their own at Oxford. You understand, Hannibal.”

Hannibal’s jaw set, just a little, at being referred to so intimately, but he inclined his head. “Of course. University is quite eye-opening.”

“Especially in how little study happens above-desk.” Richard laughed.

Blatantly crude and unpleasant. Will seemed just as put off as Hannibal was, though he quickly schooled his expression back into something placid and peaceful.

“We all were young once,” Hannibal said amiably. “Although I’ve often been told that I was born middle-aged.”

The corner of Will’s mouth quirked up in a secretive smile. Richard gave a hearty chuckle, moreso than the situation warranted.

“You’ll have to excuse us, Hannibal. I promised dear William he wouldn’t be kept out too late.”

“Of course,” Hannibal said softly. Will gave him a tight, polite smile, a tilt of his head.

“Thank you for your hospitality.”

When they left the gathering, they were whispering heatedly to each other. Hannibal's eyes tracked soft brown curls until they were out of sight.

The next party was not Hannibal's but an associate's. The drinks flowed more freely this time, and Hannibal himself had partaken in more brandy than he might usually. One had to, to survive the ruckus.

Bedelia was with a small group of women off by the balcony, also partaking much too freely in the available alcohol. He didn't blame her; he could only imagine the insipid conversations she had to suffer through, if Hannibal's evenings often gave him a headache. Lace, stylish dresses, suitable suitors for daughters far too young to even think about their debut.

Indignities upon indignities heaped upon intelligent people. He may not have loved Bedelia, but there was no denying she was a clever and interesting woman.

Her associates were not.

Hannibal sought another glass from a passing waiter and almost struck his elbow against the corner of a wall when he saw familiar curls shift in a familiar flick.

He hadn't seen Will since his own gathering, and had been thinking about him just as long.

Hannibal approached without fear, this time, and stood closer than would possibly be considered proper. "Mr Graham," he said, tilting his head when the young man met his eyes and immediately flushed. "A pleasure and a surprise."

Will took a heavy swallow from the drink in his hand- scotch, this time, rather than champagne. "Doctor Lecter," He murmured, "You've been well, I presume?"

"Tedium is good for the body."

"May boredom save us all," Will said dryly. He raised his glass towards Hannibal and then downed the dregs. "If you'll excuse me, I believe Richard is trying to get my attention."

He was gone before Hannibal could say anything, slipping effortlessly through the crowd as though he wasn't there at all, a ghost of a thing.

He dodged Hannibal's eye for the rest of the night. Hannibal would catch Will just at the corner of his eye, and find him gone when he turned for a better look. He seemed always to be just exiting conversations Hannibal entered, always just out of reach.

There was no reason for the avoidance that Hannibal could see. He hadn't seemed affronted during their previous conversations. On the contrary, he'd seemed quite engaged for the moment Hannibal had his attention.

A thought occurred to Hannibal. Inappropriate, perhaps, but so long as he didn't take advantage, likely forgivable. It seemed it was time to take an evening or two out, again.

This time, dear Will was not the sacrificial boy. Pity, but perhaps all the better for Hannibal to speak with him without interruption or certain expectations. He found Will quickly. Or, more

accurately, he found Richard by his irritating laugh echoing off the stone.

Will was near, bare again, with marks bitten into his skin and bruises drying yellow around his nipples and down his thighs. He looked just as lovely as when Hannibal had met him clothed, and just as vulnerable as the first time he saw him. With a sigh, Hannibal slowly approached the two of them, and Richard's other companions, allowing just a bare glance to the boy to watch him tense, eyes wide, before looking at his lover.

"Was it an hour, or half, that you give your boy to another?"

"Whatever coin I'm given," Richard replied with a shrug, smile warming when he recognized Hannibal. "Perhaps a discount for a friend."

It took a lot to point out that they were not, in fact, friends. Hannibal smiled cooly and took his coin purse from his belt. He passed the man three silver coins without a word and Richard grinned.

"An hour to do with him as you like," he said, pocketing the money. "In fact, take two. Just no permanent damage, he's expected at lessons tomorrow."

"Of course," Hannibal murmured, gesturing for Will. For a moment, he hesitated, earning a harsh pinch to his side.

"You were given an order, boy," Richard said, his tone deep and dark with warning. Will moved quickly then, allowing himself to be drawn into Hannibal's side. Hannibal kept a hand on his waist, guiding him gently down a shadowy hall.

There were rooms here, free for use, places where boys' cries were softened by thick walls and men could have their fill of tears or pleasure. Hannibal took Will far down the hall, where the lamps were dimmer and sobs pitched higher. Hannibal's favorite tools were this way, but more importantly, it was further from prying ears. He shut them both into a room, locking the latch securely. When he turned back to Will, he looked vacant, eyes blank and empty.

"You've been avoiding me," Hannibal said softly. Will's breath hitched, a line of tension furrowing his brow.

"I'm sorry, Sir," he said, but offered no explanation. Gone was the engaging boy Hannibal had spoken with at the party. In his place was not merely a submissive boy, but a shadow of one. Hannibal had pulled many a lover into these rooms, had them fiery and resistant or sweet and shy, but never had he had one as shuttered as Will suddenly seemed to be.

"You've been taught to speak only when spoken to," Hannibal guessed.

"Yes, Sir."

Hannibal reached for him, his thumb drawing a gentle line over Will's cheek. "You can speak freely here with me."

He watched the boy's throat work in a swallow, watched the way he kept his eyes glazed, escaping back into his mind where he couldn't be reached. It was extraordinary; as though Will were not the same person at all, but a doll made in his likeness, standing before Hannibal now.

"Master says there are better uses for my mouth, Sir," Will replied at length. Hannibal hummed, and stepped nearer, setting his other hand to Will's face as well, just holding him gently. He said nothing for long enough that Will was forced to blink and lift his eyes, back, for just a moment, to gauge the situation in the room.

"Where is the boy who spoke so cynically of love with me?" Hannibal asked him quietly. Will swallowed.

"He doesn't matter, Sir."

"Just Hannibal is fine, Will,"

Will blinked and said nothing. When Hannibal slipped his fingers into his hair Will shut his eyes and braced for violence, but all the man did was pet him, like one would a dog. Slow strokes of fingers over his scalp, tugging his curls just enough to straighten them before letting them bounce back into shape.

He couldn't quite hold back the shivered little breath he released at the feeling.

"When I saw you the first time, here, I'd assumed it was as much your pleasure as his," Hannibal admitted quietly, fingers still pensively toying with Will's hair as his other hand rested against his jaw. He made no move to touch the boy elsewhere, didn't even look.

"I find my release when it's permitted." The line was rote, but Will's gaze had solidified. He didn't meet Hannibal's eyes, but he seemed more focused.

"Release and enjoyment are not one and the same, as I'm sure you know well."

Will was beginning to lean into the touch, just slightly. Hannibal slid a hand down from his jaw to his wrist, tugging with a practiced gentleness.

"Come have a seat with me, Will."

Will's eyes flicked from Hannibal to the bed, the chest of tools beside it. Before he could panic, Hannibal gave his wrist another tug.

"Just a seat, Will. You have my word."

They sat, Hannibal on the edge of the bed, Will up by the headboard, knees drawn up to his chest to hide his nudity. After a moment, Hannibal took an extra blanket from the foot of the bed and draped it over Will's shoulders. He stared at it for a moment, disbelief coloring his features, and then hugged it tight to himself.

"I enjoy some of what we do," Will said slowly. The confession seemed to pain him. "Much of it, in fact. I just-" He hesitated, gaze flicking to the door.

“Whatever you say to me will stay with me,” Hannibal assured him.

Will swallowed softly, tucking his mouth against the blanket that covered him. He worried it between his lips for a moment before pushing out a harsh breath.

“I have seen how some people enjoy pain,” he said, eyes still in the middle distance. “Truly enjoy it. There is something… the way one looks at the other, there is an intimacy that I’ve not ever known here.” he laughed then, a harsh unhappy sound. “Or anywhere.”

He shifted just enough to cross his legs before him, blanket draping entirely over Will, leaving only his face and hair for Hannibal to look at. “I know what you’ll ask next.”

“And I know you won’t tell me,” Hannibal replied, smile tilting his lips. Enough that when Will looked at him again, the tension from his shoulders eased. He nodded, ceding the fact, and sighed, bringing a hand out from under cover to tuck a curl behind his ear.

“I didn’t suspect you would enjoy such things.” he admitted quietly. There was no judgement there, just cool curiosity. Hannibal allowed it, considering.

“It is a private club,” he said, “and secrets hold power. Perhaps it wasn’t quite a conversation for two glasses of champagne.”

“Still,” Will said, “You seemed very... . professional. Well-mannered.”

“And your experiences here have differed.”

Will shrugged. “A place like this attracts all sorts. I know it, and yet, I seem only to ever see one kind. You showed an interest in my responses. Others know what response they seek and do what they must to pry it from me.”

“And have you alerted Richard to your displeasure?” Yet, even as Hannibal asked, the answer was obvious. The *reason* , however, eluded him.

“Master finds pleasure in discomfort. Some do.” Will was closing off again, sinking back into the blanket, distancing himself from the discussion.

Hannibal reached for him, prying his frozen fingertips from the edges of the blanket so that he could interlace them with his own. “Yet you don’t. If you’re unhappy with him, Will-”

“Don’t.”

“You are a man of your own mind,”

“But not my own means,” Will replied, freeing his hand with some reluctance to fold it into the blanket once more. He wanted to reach out, to touch Hannibal, to hold his hand. To have him stroke his face like he had before, so gently, so softly, as though Will were precious, not fragile.

“Please. It’s better not to delve into daydreams. Hope is often a cruel mistress.”

Hannibal considered the boy before him and reached for his hand again. This time, with a sigh, Will relinquished it. Hannibal did nothing more than lace their fingers together. Allowed Will to squeeze or relax his hand as he wanted, allowed him to free himself and hold his palm up against Hannibal's as though measuring the difference between them.

"I hope I have won you two hours of peace, at least," Hannibal said after a while. Will snorted. Not quite the same derisive thing as before, but closer to the man Hannibal remembered, not the doll he'd bought.

"It depends on what you want to do with them."

"Nothing," Hannibal shrugged. "Speak with you. Allow you rest, if you wish. Leave you in peace entirely."

"If I return unmarked there will be questions," Will sighed, bringing his free hand up to rub his eyes. "Two hours is a long time."

"I have no desire to hurt you."

"It will be crueller if you don't," Will replied, drawing his thumb over Hannibal's knuckles pensively.

"It would be unfair of him to discipline you for my choices."

"It wouldn't be the first time."

The silence lingered over them for a moment, Will's cheeks darkening slowly. Hannibal found the revelation struck a chord within him, an irritation that would not be soothed. He pushed it down. Better to focus on Will, for now, and not things that could not be changed.

"There are marks that can be left that needn't cause you pain," he said, pulling Will's knuckles up to his lips.

Will's brow furrowed. Hannibal trailed his kisses up a little higher, to Will's shoulder, then the dip of his collarbone.

"Oh."

Hannibal smiled against the soft skin. 'Oh,' indeed.

Hannibal licked salt from Will's throat, sealing his lips around the rabbit-quick beat of his heart. He sucked and bit teasingly, at first, then a little rougher. When Will's sweet voice broke on a tentative moan, Hannibal's thin shred of control tore.

He pulled the boy nearer, not enough to restrain or hurt, but enough for Will to cling to him as Hannibal rested his palm against the back of Will's neck to hold him still. His lips ventured further down, to where Will's neck met his shoulder, and this time bit down hard, earning little fingers tight in his hair and another helpless little noise.

Will was no stranger to bruises. It was rare he didn't wear a dozen at a time. But none had ever been left like this.

Men had pinned him, struck him, whipped him, pinched him. They had bitten him and left marks but it had never felt so nice before. His entire body shivered at the feeling of Hannibal's lips against him, at the way he slid his palm down to his shoulders, fingertips just beneath the blanket where it still draped over Will's body.

He didn't rip the covering away. He didn't yank Will into his lap or throw him to the ground on his knees. He held him, and claimed him with sucked bruises and warm breath.

Between his legs, Will's cock thickened, and he squirmed just a little to keep himself covered. Hannibal pulled back to draw the tip of his nose over the first mark he'd left before pulling back just enough to see Will properly again.

There he was, that sweet and fiery boy. Bright eyes, flushed cheeks; he was present, he was entirely *here* with him. Hannibal drew his knuckles over Will's cheek and sat back with a playful smile, looking over his handiwork.

"Perhaps another few, if you'd allow them, as proof of our illicit consummation."

The question was cruel. If Will would *allow* them, as if he could have turned them away, when his skin was pebbling up into goose bumps and his arousal burned hot in his stomach.

It was foolish to torment himself further, but Will let the blanket drop just a bit more, exposing the top of his chest, the faintest hint of color at his nipples.

Hannibal set his teeth to Will's chest, tracing over the marks he left with his tongue. He decorated Will in reddened suck-bruises, bites that brought pleasure with their pain. When he finally pulled back, Will was dotted with the things, an obvious concentration.

Hannibal was not the only one who could tease. It seemed unfair that Will should be so affected and Hannibal not at all. Will slid his foot across the sheets, stretching his leg out straight until his modesty was only barely concealed by the blanket.

"The placement is a bit blatant, don't you think?" He said, voice breathy and higher than he might have liked it. "Too obvious."

Hannibal looked down at the pale skin Will had exposed, a slow smile overtaking him. He went down to his belly in the bedding, wrapping a hand around Will's knee. His lips left a trail up Will's inner thigh, higher and higher until the scent of Will's arousal was obvious. Only then did Hannibal graze his teeth over pale skin, marking Will darkest and deepest here, in the most intimate place Will could bear to allow.

Hannibal could feel his shiver all the way to his own bones. Will bit his lip and closed his eyes but didn't pull away and Hannibal watched his brows furrow deeply, draw close in helpless pleasure.

Surely someone had figured out the boy would wear pleasure twice as beautifully as he wore pain?

Surely someone had touched him well before Hannibal?

He ducked his head again and teased his lips back up Will's leg, kissing reverently at his knee, worshiping the curve of his calf, nipping teasingly at the boney ankle.

"When you take your pleasure, where do you find it?" Hannibal asked him, and Will blushed deeply before opening his eyes. Hannibal thought for a moment that he wouldn't answer, but the young man was nothing if not surprising to him, since the first moment he'd seen him tormented.

"You've marked a path to it," he replied quietly, ducking his cheeks against the blanket as though he could wipe the blush away. "My mind does the rest. My body responds as young bodies do."

"Pity," Hannibal murmured, eyes over the marks he'd made, up to look over Will's bright eyes and wild hair. "A body should respond because it can't not. Because it is overtaken by such pleasures that it feels as though your skin will burst with them. The mind can only do so much."

Will's lips had parted, wet and bitten-red, and Hannibal lingered long on them as well before sitting back where he had been before he'd drawn Will near. He would ask nothing of the boy this evening. He would ask nothing of the boy at all, until Will reached out and took it on his own, or asked for Hannibal with that lilting voice he'd given to others. A boy like this deserved to be spoiled with wonders, and Hannibal intended to do so, but only at Will's behest.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

> *"You are a madman," Will told him, breathless, before Hannibal kissed him again, swallowing the tiny nervous laugh Will gave him, ducking down just enough to grasp Will's thighs and hoist him up, pleased when the boy immediately wrapped his legs around him and his arms over Hannibal's shoulders and held him close. "And a fiend," Will added, grinning.*

Chapter Notes

> Warnings/medieval torture devices for this chapter: The Judas Cradle.

Will had become a regular face at parties, though Hannibal still found him difficult to corner. They had not spoken in public since Hannibal had purchased two hours of his time, sucking bruises into his skin and then coaxing thoughts from him for the rest of their time together.

In private, though, Hannibal had become a regular patron. Conversation flowed freely between the two of them, so long as Hannibal paid coin to Richard first. He had not yet managed to convince Will that his means would be better cared for elsewhere, that others might prove just as generous a benefactor. Others such as Hannibal.

But they spoke, and Hannibal sucked bruises into Will's skin and mussed his hair, and then they went their separate ways.

Tonight, however, was a wild night. A night when drink and drug were plentiful, when boys put on shows for their Masters and anyone might reach out and touch if they so chose.

Will was already on display when Hannibal arrived, and his suffering was so sweet that it nearly bowled Hannibal over.

The Judas Cradle was not always a popular choice. It required a deft, careful hand, a Master who knew their boy's limits inside and out. Will had been chained to the ceiling and then lifted above the sharp pyramid, made to bear down on it as his own weight impaled him. He could not have been on it for long; though damp with sweat, he showed no visible distress yet, and the light weights that might be added to his ankles were still left to the side.

He was hard, perhaps from physical manipulation, but perhaps from his own mind. When he met Hannibal's eyes across the crowded room, his cock twitched temptingly.

Hannibal just watched, made no move to step closer, said nothing to anyone. He looked over Will's form, tense and trembling, the way his stomach was sucked in, how his muscles stood out stark against his throat and arms as he tried to pull himself higher on the chains that held him prisoner.

He'd had to make do with the expressions Will made in pain, to substitute for those he would make in pleasure as Hannibal had the boy in his mind palace, over and over, night after night. There, Will had been tangled in silks and velvets, he had been shivering and overstimulated, he'd been begging Hannibal's name so sweetly, so sweetly…

As usual for Richard, Hannibal realized the man was happily pocketing coin for the chance to torment his boy, already in plain discomfort. A man stepped between Will's thighs to take his cock in his mouth, pulling a whine from Will at the feeling. Whatever strength had been keeping him above the cradle waned and his voice pulled high in pain. He was left aching, in every possible way, with a sharp slap to his thigh as several men watching laughed lowly, pleased by the spectacle.

The cradle was a cruel thing in that it worked slowly. It was for endurance and cruelty, not a quick sharp shock. Realistically, a body as healthy as Will's could sit upon the cradle for hours, possibly even a day, before he was in any danger.

Someone else flicked a coin Richard's way and approached Will to bind his ankles together, drawing a plaintive little sob from him. Now every shift drove the sharp point of the pyramid into Will, no matter what he did. The way he was tied ensured he couldn't find comfortable balance, comfortable leverage to support himself when his arms grew too weak to hold him aloft.

It was possible to bring a boy pleasure, or even to orgasm with such torments, if one was patient and careful. Richard was neither. At the behest of another coin, he bound one of the weights to Will's ankles. At Will's plaintive, desperate wail, the crowd that had gathered began to laugh.

"He protests so loudly," Richard told the crowd, "And yet you should have heard him beg for it when I told him what the night had in store. There's nothing he likes quite so much as being taken apart, is there, boy?"

Will did not seem to hear him. He'd closed his eyes, drawing in shallow breaths through his nose. Richard struck him hard across the cheek. Over Will's low moan, he said, "You were asked a question, boy."

"I'm s-sorry, Sir. I love it."

"And what are you?"

Will's eyes cracked open, finding Hannibal's again in the crowd. His pale face painted itself red with shame as he spoke. "I'm a pain slut, Sir."

Hannibal swallowed, watching Will blink softly at him before rolling his eyes back to hide wherever it was in his mind he went when the torment got too much for him. Will had told

him, once, when they had shared their quiet hours together, that it wasn't the pain itself that overwhelmed him, it was the indifference of those delivering it. Some men hit just to feel a strike land, not for their own pleasure or for the pleasure of the boy being beaten. He'd told Hannibal that Richard took great pleasure in debasing Will, simply to watch that pain hurt Will more than any whip or rod ever could.

Hannibal watched the endurance a while longer.

Someone paid for five belt lashes and Will was a sobbing shaking mess by the end, the weights swinging and moving his legs with them with every strike, grinding him further and further into the painful device he was bound above. Someone else paid just enough to simply spread Will's cheeks and see how red and sore he was from this, how deep he'd taken the torturous thing.

In the end, Hannibal offered his usual silver for his usual time, and watched Richard crank back a lever to tug Will's arms up higher over his head as the chain links straightened and tensed together and lifted him off the cradle to hang above it once more. When he shoved Will towards him, the boy couldn't keep his legs beneath him and Hannibal caught him around the shoulders before he could land on the ground.

"Sweet boy," he breathed against him, as Will shook and clung to him. "Just a moment longer for them, then we will be alone."

Instead of taking Will under his cloak, holding him near, stroking his hair from his eyes, Hannibal hoisted the boy over his shoulder, an arm hooking over the backs of his knees to keep him balanced as he carried Will away. The boy hung limp and didn't struggle, he didn't even make a sound outside of the soft little cries as Hannibal set him to the bed on his side and covered him in a blanket, securing the door before moving to kneel beside the bed.

"Oh, Will," he sighed, surprised when the boy turned into him and pressed his face to Hannibal's chest as he wept in earnest.

"I hate him," Will said viciously, his voice cracking with hitching sobs. "I hate him, I hate all of them."

Hannibal held him close, tangling his fingers through Will's curls to massage at his scalp the way he liked. "Then why stay?" He asked, feeling helpless with his fiery boy in pieces in his arms. "Surely you know by now that I would never see you destitute?"

Will laughed, an awful, bitter sound, and then sobbed harder, louder, until he was an animal thing, lost to despair. Hannibal had never seen him so devastated, not once in the weeks they'd met like this.

It seemed ages passed before Will's breathing settled and his body stopped shaking. An eternity in which Hannibal could do nothing but hold him and whisper useless sounds of comfort to deaf ears.

Finally, Will grew so still that Hannibal thought him asleep, until the words came, so quiet as to be nearly inaudible.

“I used to want this, you know.” His voice soft and trembling, Will hid his face in Hannibal’s shirt as he spoke. “I sought this place out. I paid the membership fee. I could afford it. My father left me a tidy sum, it was meant to carry me through many years until I could make my own fortunes. I was barely more than a boy, then. Perhaps you think me a boy now, but I was a wisp of a thing. Small and sweet and *stupid* .”

“Will-“

“I wanted to be hurt,” Will pressed on, “Hurt and teased and fucked and then glued back together. I wanted to try so many things, and he promised it was going to feel so good. And it did. Until it didn’t. Until he had me break the lease on my flat and move in to the gardener’s cottage, until he had me entrust my accounts to him to ‘invest,’ until he told me we were going to a party and then held me down and fucked me in front of all his friends and swore to me he’d ruin me if I ever left him.”

Hannibal moved to sit on the bed, from where he had knelt on the floor and held Will against him, and found that even here Will moved to curl up in his lap rather than keep his distance. Hannibal wrapped the blanket around him, secure and warm, and let his arms rest heavy over Will’s form.

“If he has taken your money, how else could he possibly ruin you?”

Will’s laugh sounded like a sob, but when he turned his head against Hannibal’s shoulder his eyes were closed, no more tears seeping from beneath red lids.

“Who would marry a young man with proclivities such as mine,” Will sighed after a while. “Any prospects I have for any sort of future would rely on my marrying up.”

“Unless you left the country.” Hannibal suggested, to which Will snorted as well.

“We find ourselves in the same cruel twist of fate, then, doctor. I haven’t the money to leave, because were I to leave, my money and reputation would be gone forever.”

“Let me help you, Will.”

“No,” Will swallowed, turning his face in a semblance of a nuzzle against Hannibal’s chest. “No, I’m done trusting others with my fate.” Will made another sound then, this one closer to a laugh than the cruel things that had pushed from his throat before. “And you ask me why I’m cynical, Doctor.”

Hannibal cradled the nape of Will’s neck, massaging his scalp with gentle pressure. “I would love you,” he said softly. “I would love you as you were meant to be loved, and hurt you only in the ways you want to be hurt.”

“You already hurt me,” Will whispered. “I lie awake in that empty cottage and think about these moments. I lie under him and imagine the way you touch me when you return me bruised. You have ruined me for happiness, Hannibal. I had none before, and so couldn’t miss it. Now I have these moments and it becomes harder and harder to leave my body when Richard demands a game.”

Hannibal tucked his face into Will's hair. "I only wanted to know you," he murmured. "And now I find I cannot regret it. I'm sorry, Will. I've hurt you so badly and cannot even offer you remorse."

Will laughed wetly, shaking his head. "Don't regret it," he said, "I couldn't bear it if you had carved such a hole into me and I hadn't done the same for you."

Hannibal shifted to cup Will's jaw, running his thumb over a tear stained cheek. Will tilted his head up to look at him, and at that point it seemed only natural that Hannibal should pull him in and touch their lips together.

Will's lips parted at the first touch, a gasp pressing warm against Hannibal's mouth before Will slipped a hand around his shoulders and leaned in to kiss Hannibal properly. It was soft, tentative only in the shaky trust they had started to build between them, not from lack of desire.

Hannibal had not ever touched Will beyond stroking his hair or sucking bruises into his skin to keep him safe from a beating. He had never taken advantage of Will's exhaustion, when he dozed for the two hours they shared before returning reluctantly to Richard; he had never left Will bare, always the blanket between them, in Will's hands to move or keep closed as he pleased.

Kissing him, now, felt almost like overstepping, if Will wasn't the first to open his mouth, the first to slip his tongue between Hannibal's lips to seek the other's, the first to moan so softly into the kiss that Hannibal had to break it to catch his breath.

He cupped Will's face and looked at him, small and abused and tired, curled in Hannibal's lap and watching him with eyes bright as the ocean. Will swallowed, shifting just enough to straddle Hannibal's lap with a wince before leaning into the hand that touched him, setting his own to Hannibal's chest to feel his heart beating beneath the layers of cloth.

This time when Will leaned in to kiss him again, Hannibal's hands slipped down his back to hold Will gently against his hips, just above where the blanket had bunched around him as he moved.

There would be no lovemaking tonight, no join of their bodies, no pleasure taught to Will the way it was meant to be taught. But there was this, soft kisses traded between tender words. Whispers of affection. Promises from Hannibal that Will would not believe, but that would bring a pretty blush to his face regardless.

Later, Hannibal sucked bruises into Will's skin and carried him back to Richard, under the excuse that Will was too well-used to walk. In truth, he had merely wanted more time to touch.

Later, Hannibal went through his calling cards, contemplating.

Bedelia accused him of being smitten, with the distracted way he went through his life. She seemed pleased. He wondered if she would have been less so had she known the depth of the trouble he was entangling himself in.

Richard owned several acres of property, and a manor house that towered excessively for one unmarried man whose parents had long since passed. The groundskeeper's cottage, by contrast, was barely more than a shed, constructed pleasingly from stone but tiny. Well over a week after the wild night, Hannibal knocked. He had waited until past midnight, when all the lights in the manor house had finally dimmed. Will answered in a dressing gown, pale faced and visibly alarmed.

"What are you doing here?"

Hannibal kissed him before he could protest further, stepping close and smiling when Will folded his fingers in his cloak and tugged him into the cottage. Hannibal's hand caught the door as he went, closing them safely inside.

"You are a madman," Will told him, breathless, before Hannibal kissed him again, swallowing the tiny nervous laugh Will gave him, ducking down just enough to grasp Will's thighs and hoist him up, pleased when the boy immediately wrapped his legs around him and his arms over Hannibal's shoulders and held him close.

"And a fiend," Will added, grinning, when he pulled back, a hand against Hannibal's face, fingertips tracing his lips until Hannibal sucked one between them and Will gasped, brows drawing. "Surprising me like this. How did you know I'd let you in?"

"I didn't."

Will's grin was brighter, almost playful, and he pulled his finger free only to suck it into his own mouth. Then he surged forward to kiss Hannibal again, hands in his hair, over his face, tugging uselessly at the buttons of his shirt as Hannibal carried him the three steps needed to get to the tiny bed and set Will against it. He followed him down, kneeling between Will's legs and looking up at him with narrowed eyes.

"Send me away, I'll go."

Will shook his head, biting his lip. Hannibal licked his own.

"Then tell me what you want, sweet boy, and I will give it to you."

"Those things you promised me," Will said, shyness overtaking him, "I want them."

Will's dressing robe covered him from neck to ankle. It parted now with the spread of his thighs, revealing the rumpled hem of a nightshirt made more for comfort than fashion. Hannibal set his hands to it, inching it up Will's thighs until he squirmed.

"I promised you adoration," Hannibal whispered, hiding his words in the healing bruises of Will's thighs. "Worship. I promised you pleasure so deep you drowned in it." His fingers found Will's undergarments. Will flushed pink and beautiful when Hannibal removed them, tucking his nightshirt up to expose him to the cool night air. "I promised that I would never hurt you unless it was what you wanted."

Will's eyes fluttered closed. When Hannibal's hands spread his thighs wider, he turned his face away. "I'm indecent," he murmured, "I'm not what you deserve."

He was open, between his thighs, no longer slick from oil, but with the tell-tale signs of use from earlier that night. Hannibal's ire was not for Will. *Never* for Will.

"You are everything," he said, "I don't care what he seeks from you. It changes nothing of what I want to give. Will you let me?"

"Yes," the word was a shivered moan, and no sooner was it past Will's lips that Hannibal's were against his skin, kissing over bruises he had left, sucking hard over those he hadn't, claiming them as his own. He kissed up to the curve of Will's thigh, nuzzled the hair at the base of his cock as Will trembled above him, open and vulnerable and so, so beautiful.

Hannibal didn't rush this, not for himself or his Will. He took his time mouthing the base of Will's cock, tonguing his balls, feeling them tense beneath his lips as Will's breathing hitched and he tried to close his legs.

"No," Hannibal breathed against him. "No, let me see you. Let me see my beautiful boy,"

Will dropped a hand to Hannibal's hair as he teased Will's foreskin back with gentle fingers and outright sobbed when Hannibal engulfed him in welcome wet heat.

It was rare that Will had his cock sucked. Often it was done to work him up and reminded him he couldn't come until he was told. Sometimes it was done in cruelty, after Will was shaking from an orgasm or several and his tormented cock was forced back to hardness.

Hannibal sucked Will down like he was tasting ambrosia. The sound he made vibrated through Will's skin and curled his fingers hard in Hannibal's hair as he bit down on a knuckle to keep himself quiet. It was unlikely anyone would hear them - the house was too far and no one walked the estate after dark - but Will wasn't used to feeling so overwhelmed so quickly with *pleasure* rather than pain. He felt dizzy. His heart beat too quickly. He curled his thighs over Hannibal's shoulders and tugged him closer, gasping out a laugh when Hannibal not only let him but went willingly.

His hands were worshipful wherever they touched Will. He stroked his thighs and up higher, as Will lay back, letting a hand touch over Will's taut stomach, up higher to tickle over a nipple, higher still to press soft to Will's throat, to his pulse point beneath his jaw. His other hand teased between Will's legs, rubbing over his entrance until Will was arching up and trying to rock into Hannibal's fingers, breath catching with how deep the man had him in his mouth.

Will was shaking.

"Please," he whispered. "Hannibal, please, I'm going to come -"

Hannibal moaned his approval, sucking hard at the delicate flesh in his mouth. Will rocked beneath him, a breathy gasp stuttering his words. "No, no, Hannibal, *stop.* "

Hannibal pulled away immediately, pleased by the sweet whine Will made when he was suddenly bereft of sensation. Will stared at him with wide eyes, shock and disappointment both at war on his face. He had not expected Hannibal to listen, clearly, and seemed uncertain how to feel about the fact that he had. A word, perhaps, would be useful, but not tonight. Tonight was for sweetness.

“Have I hurt you?” Hannibal asked, leaning up to press their foreheads together. Will swallowed, the bob of his throat enticing, though Hannibal could leave no marks that were not already gracing Will’s body.

“No,” Will whispered, “No, but I…. You promised. You said you would….” He seemed unwilling to say it, unable to give form to the hopes Hannibal had bolstered within him.

But Hannibal had some idea, given how Will had rocked towards his fingers. “I said I would love you the way you deserve to be loved,” He said, tugging the little vial of oil from the pocket of his trousers. Will flushed when he saw it, but spread his thighs to welcome Hannibal back between them.

“I’m sore,” Will said, more apology than warning. Hannibal knew it was unlikely to stop Will, he was far too used to giving more than his fair share to a coupling.

“You’ll tell me if it hurts,” Hannibal told him, slick fingers massaging over Will’s reddened entrance. Will closed his eyes and bit his lip, sucking in a breath when two fingers tested his resistance. Hannibal slid into him in slow, steady increments, allowing Will the time to turn him away if he so chose.

But Will’s body was hot and tight, drawing him in, making promises as to how it would feel when Hannibal’s cock eased into it.

Hannibal took his time working Will open, kissing him gently over bruises Will had acquired since the last time Hannibal had seen him bare. He nuzzled between Will’s legs, enough that Will laughed softly and drew a hand through his hair again. When Hannibal teased against Will’s prostate he gasped, tensing around him.

“Oh, that feels good,” he sighed.

Hannibal wondered if Richard, or anyone, had ever taken the time to tease Will properly; not cruelly, but enough to have him writhing and gasping and aching to come, from fingers or tongue or cock alone. When Hannibal pulled his fingers free, Will reached for him, tugging him close to kiss.

It was softer, this time, almost embarrassed, as though checking to see if Hannibal’s promises were earnest or spoken rashly. Hannibal kissed him deep, allowed Will to lick his way into his mouth and explore as he wanted as Hannibal pushed his nightshirt up to bunch under his arms. When they broke to breathe, Will wriggled free of it, and the robe as well.

He lay bare for Hannibal now, and didn’t reach to cover himself. Didn’t seek a blanket, didn’t shy away. Instead, he sat up and worked free a few buttons on Hannibal’s shirt, undid his

vest. Hannibal slipped both off and tossed them away, smiling when Will slid his fingers through the hair on his chest and leaned in to nuzzle against his throat.

“I’ve been thinking about this,” Will admitted softly, as hesitant fingers moved next to Hannibal’s belt, the buttons of his trousers. “Some nights it’s the only way I get through, thinking of how you’d feel against me instead.”

“Beautiful boy,” Hannibal praised him, stroking his fingers over Will’s brows, resting his palms against Will’s cheeks as the boy bared him and slipped a hand into his underwear to stroke Hannibal’s cock. “I’ll be so gentle with you.”

Will laughed weakly against Hannibal’s skin as he stroked him up, learning by feel alone the girth and weight of him. He licked his lips, drew one between his teeth and looked up at Hannibal.

“I don’t want you to be gentle.”

“But you need me to be.”

Will swallowed, eyes seeking between Hannibal’s before he smiled a little wider. “Maybe just tonight,” he agreed.

Hannibal let Will pull him free of the last of his garments, until they were both fully exposed to each other for the first time. Hannibal’s gaze was worshipful, and he hid the curve of his smile in a kiss against Will’s cheek.

“If it hurts, we’ll stop,” Hannibal promised, pulling Will’s knees up to bracket his hips. “There are other pleasures we can seek.”

“This is the one I want,” Will assured him.

Will was no virgin, not for many years, but he gasped like one at the first nudge of Hannibal’s slick cock. His lips parted, his thighs trembling alongside Hannibal’s hips. It was not his first time, but it was *theirs* , and Hannibal moved as carefully as though Will were glass.

“Bear down,” Hannibal told him, “don’t tense so, sweet boy, I won’t hurt you.”

It was impossible to fully discard the years of fear and mistrust that had been trained into him, but moment by moment, Will opened himself further to let Hannibal slip inside. Hannibal seated himself with a harsh puff of breath against Will’s jaw, a low rumble of a laugh that Will could feel *everywhere* .

“You will undo me,” Hannibal murmured.

"Good," Will laughed helplessly, "it's only fair since you undo me."

He drew his knees up around Hannibal, stroked his hands down the strong arms that held the man above him. After a moment or so Will nodded, a quick jerk of his head, and Hannibal slowly pulled out, and just as slowly thrust back into him. Will's entire body shivered, eyes closing and lips parting as Hannibal started a slow, languid pace.

He'd thought once that Richard used to make love to him before he'd changed. But it had never felt like this. Hannibal caught one of Will's hands and grasped it, fingers twining as he pressed Will's knuckles to the bed by his face and leaned in to kiss him.

It was achingly slow and utterly wonderful. Will reached for Hannibal and found him, sought a kiss and got one, wrapped his legs around Hannibal's hips and pulled a moan from him that echoed in Will. He turned his head aside, grinned when Hannibal followed, kissing his jaw, his throat, the join of his shoulder.

"More," he demanded quietly, gasping as Hannibal thrust deeper, held longer, pulled back a little more harshly. "God, you're going to make me come -"

"Good," Hannibal breathed, free hand catching Will's hair to tug, arching his neck as he set his teeth to a sensitive nipple and held it captive as he teased it with his tongue.

For the first time in years, Will let himself think about his early fumblings in the club. About how nice it had been to have all eyes on him, to let a man hurt him who had promised to soothe him afterwards. Old fantasies and distant yearnings rumbled up inside him.

He wanted to go back in time and give those moments to Hannibal, to let Hannibal take him to pieces because surely, *surely* Hannibal would put him back together.

Will’s trust was an atrophied and rotten thing, but his hope still beat in his chest.

“Don’t stop,” Will whispered as Hannibal turned to torment the other nipple, “god, please don’t stop.”

It didn’t stop. It built higher and higher until it broke, until Will crested that peak of pleasure and dragged Hannibal over it with him. He dug scratches down Hannibal’s back, and his cries were surely too loud, surely would be heard all the way up at the house.

Hannibal lay heavy against him, soothing wide rough hands over Will’s sides, over his shoulders, pulling back just enough to slip from him and tilt his head to kiss Will’s willing mouth.

“Remarkable thing,” Hannibal told him, stroking knuckles down his face. “How beautiful you are.”

Will laughed, another absolutely helpless sound before clinging to Hannibal above him, forcing himself to breathe slowly, telling himself that the last thing he could do right then was cry and ruin all this. He kissed Hannibal instead.

“I wish you could stay,” Will whispered, watching Hannibal with sleepy eyes as the doctor settled half over and half beside him, an elbow propped up to raise his head.

“I can, for a while.” Hannibal told him, reluctant, himself, to leave Will to the torments that awaited him come morning. He touched the boy gently, stroked his hair, traced his brows, the length of his nose, the bow of his lips, memorizing him so relaxed and blissful.

“I think I shall throw another party,” Hannibal said at length, catching Will’s eyes and smiling as realization filled the boy’s cheeks with warmth.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Arriving at the club always threw Hannibal into conflicting emotions. Happiness, knowing he would see Will again. Displeasure, in always seeing him so upset before he did. This evening it took him longer to find Will than it usually would; he wasn't being shown, he wasn't being yelled at or degraded by Richard. In fact, he couldn't hear Richard either.

Chapter Notes

Torture implement warning: Heretic's Fork, branding.
Also in this chapter: consensual kinky fun, wax play

"You're insane," Will said through a rush of breathless giggles. Hannibal tucked him further into the alcove, pressing him back against the wall and leaving soft kisses down the curve of his throat. Hannibal had hung the tapestry just that morning, to Bedelia's amused staring.

"Hannibal," Will protested, when Hannibal's hands began to drift just a bit further down than was decent, "Hannibal, he's going to kill me."

"He'll never notice," Hannibal assured him.

"He circles me like a vulture," Will said, glancing over Hannibal's shoulder to the back of the tapestry, "He'll want to check that I'm 'behaving myself.'"

"Then we'll be very quick," Hannibal promised, dropping to his knees.

Will cursed, pressing a hand against his mouth to keep himself quiet as Hannibal opened his pants just enough to reach in and nuzzle against Will's bare cock. The party beyond was running loud and quick, someone played the harpsichord, people were talking amongst themselves. Men, women, young adults Bedelia insisted had to suffer as well, when Hannibal had suggested the gathering.

But they weren't there.

They were hidden in a warm corner, hidden by a heavy tapestry, hidden from everyone but each other.

Will squeaked when Hannibal teased the head of his cock between his lips, broad palm against his stomach to keep him still as Will squirmed back against the wall, one hand in Hannibal's hair the other digging into the wallpaper.

"Don't," he whispered, ducking his head against his shoulder to muffle his laugh. "Hannibal, stop it."

Hannibal didn't, teasing a moment, two longer, before pulling back and tucking Will back into his clothes. He kissed him deep when he stood again, relishing the little fingers in his hair as Will yanked him near and kissed the taste of himself from Hannibal's tongue.

"I should go," Will breathed, wrapping his arms securely around Hannibal's middle. "Back out there, before he notices."

"You should."

"I should," Will sighed, and made no move to. Hannibal stroked his hair and smiled, breathing in the scent of his boy when he was content and clean, happy. It was beautiful seeing him smile so often, when he'd so rarely even let the corners of his lips lift before.

Eventually, it was Hannibal who sent Will back out, listening for sounds in the corridor before watching Will slip from their place and jog down the hall before slowing his pace. Hannibal stayed a while longer, licking his lips to get the last of Will's taste against his tongue before he washed it away with wine.

But the night was young, the party would last a while longer. And no one ever looked at the tapestries.

Arriving at the club always threw Hannibal into conflicting emotions. Happiness, knowing he would see Will again. Displeasure, in always seeing him so upset before he did. This evening it took him longer to find Will than it usually would; he wasn't being shown, he wasn't being yelled at or degraded by Richard. In fact, he couldn't hear Richard either. Perhaps they weren't there? Perhaps he'd miscalculated and arrived on a night Will had been too hurt to attend?

But then he saw him, still and silent, trembling from keeping such a painful position as he knelt by Richard's chair as the man smoked and talked. The implement keeping Will so poised made Hannibal's lip flick back with a hiss, revealing his teeth.

There were implements for pleasure, rather than torture, and there were tortures that could be pleasurable. The Heretic's Fork was neither of those. Locked tight around Will's neck with a metal collar, the sharp prongs jutted upwards towards the base of his chin, and down between his collarbones, keeping his back straight and his chin held high. Hannibal could see rivulets of blood drying from moments where Will had failed to keep his posture.

"Ah, Hannibal, my friend!" Richard called when he saw him. He had somehow mistaken Hannibal's patronage for admiration, seeming entirely too smug when they were forced to interact in the same circles. "Come for another taste?"

“You have him too well trained,” Hannibal said smoothly, “A man could grow addicted to such obedience.”

Richard snorted. “Well, he wasn’t quite so obedient today, were you boy?”

Will should have been unable to respond, given the pressure of the fork, but it was clear Richard cared nothing for it. Will tilted his head back and parted his lips as little as possible, murmuring, “No, Sir.”

“He’s been warned about his attitude before,” Richard explained, “And he likes gags too much for them to be a proper deterrent, he moans around them like the street’s finest little whore.”

Will’s blank expression didn’t falter, but his eyes, when they met Hannibal’s, were helpless.

“Will you still be selling him for the night?” Hannibal asked.

Richard leaned back in his seat, taking a slow drag of his cigarette. “Eventually,” he said, “When I feel he’s learned his lesson.” Then, as Hannibal watched, he leaned over and put out his cigarette right between Will’s shoulderblades.

Will cried out, jerking forward and driving the fork into his skin. His hands weren’t bound but he knew better than to reach up to ease the hurt. He dug his fingers into his thighs instead, whitening the skin and leaving marks in his wake. He was shaking, trying to catch his breath without moving more than he had to.

Hannibal’s hands closed into fists but he said nothing.

He tried to say nothing.

“What did he do to earn this?” Hannibal asked at length. Richard shrugged, a lionine motion that made Hannibal’s anger boil within him.

“Refused.”

Hannibal swallowed, a deliberate thing that pursed his lips and paled them. “Unforgivable.”

“He knows better,” Richard said. “He’s been taught this lesson over and over again, but he’s not very bright.”

Rage was a white-hot feeling, nearly unbearable. Hannibal wanted to *kill* him, to rend Richard limb from limb and leave him for the dogs to feast upon. Instead, he sat beside him, patient, calm.

It took too long for Richard to feel Will had been properly taught. Too many minutes pretending to be the same kind of filth. Eventually, Hannibal made himself appealing by offering to punish Will himself.

“He should see the sort of situation he might find himself in if he was not so lucky as to have you to Master him.”

It went straight to Richard's head, or possibly his cock. His eyes were bright when he unlocked the fork, shoving Will forward into Hannibal's waiting grasp. Hannibal forced himself to be rough when he would much rather have comforted Will. He gripped his wrist tight, dragging him down the hall to their preferred room.

Inside, he immediately gathered Will to him, careful not to set his hand to the wound on Will's back, the burn. He kissed the drying blood, tongued over it as Will winced and clung to him, trembling in his grip.

"I don't know how long I can keep it up with him," Will admitted, sniffing and drawing his hand beneath his nose. "Any time he touches me I flinch. I hate it."

"Will," Hannibal didn't repeat to him the things he so often whispered to Will about when they were together here, when they were together in Will's little cottage in the middle of the night. He could rescue him. He would. He would do anything, and Will wouldn't let him.

"He hasn't burned me in years," Will murmured, wrapping his arms around Hannibal's middle, fingers tugging at the hem of his shirt to free it from his pants. "I wouldn't put it past him to brand me."

Hannibal made a low rumble of a sound and held Will tighter. He had been prepared to kill Richard for the marks he'd already left on his boy, but a brand -

"I'll kill him."

Will snorted. "You wouldn't."

Hannibal set a hand to the back of his head and kissed him.

He fucked Will roughly, this time, because Will may have deserved soft and sweet, but what he *needed* was a claim, for someone else to leave their mark on him. Hannibal made his sobs echo, had Will screaming when he came.

And after, he was what Will deserved, gentle, loving. Will tucked his head under Hannibal's chin and clung to him, half-asleep from his exhaustion.

"I'd do anything for you," he reminded Will. Will yawned, blinking up at him through dark eyelashes.

"Don't go to jail for me. I'd really be alone, then."

Hannibal, the letter read, *Only minutes ago you were curled alongside me, sleeping so soundly. You've been gone for seconds. If I look out the window, I'm sure I'll see you slipping through the trees towards the road.*

And yet I ache. Loneliness settles in me as if you'd gone weeks ago, instead. I want to wake to you tomorrow, and the next day, and the one after that. I want you to stay for a sunrise. Longing for things I cannot have will one day be the death of me, but living pains me less with you to look forward to.

Hannibal had found it tucked into his breakfast tray, between the coffee pot and the upturned empty cup. When he questioned his butler, the man explained that the note had been left with the morning paper by the door.

Hannibal folded it into a favourite chapter of a book before setting about to write a reply. It would be harder for Hannibal's letter to be delivered unnoticed to Will - Bedelia cared little for his dalliances, and no one on staff would ever open his mail. But Richard held Will by the throat with his control, and such things as letters wouldn't make it to Will whole.

Instead, he considered an alternative.

I wake to the taste of you on my lips and I ache , came Hannibal's reply, *you have foraged your way into my heart and made a home within it, sweet boy. I feel you with every beat of it, I daren't count how many beats pass between us seeing each other. We will have our sunrises, Will, I promise you.*

He enclosed within the letter a sketch, Will in repose, eyes half open and smile languid in pleasure. A moment of dozens, drawn from memory. Hannibal kissed the paper, sealing it with wax and setting it aside. Then he set to write another.

He would pass Will several when he came to the cottage again, and take his promise to open them only when he must. He could not risk Will's safety sending the missives he so wanted to, so he would leave them with the boy who they were for, his choice for when to open them and see what was within.

Sketches, mostly, of Will. Will reading, Will sleeping, Will grinning at Hannibal with blankets half-covering his face. One sketch of Hannibal himself, he tried not to draw himself too serious, too formal. He hoped Will enjoyed it, when he came to that letter.

Will secreted the letters away under a floorboard. His fingers itched to open them all, but he took Hannibal's instructions to heart. He would open them on the days that hurt, the ones that threatened to break him.

Hannibal had come to him with a bag this time, a heavy leather thing that Will eyed curiously.

"You said that once, there had been things you liked, things you wanted from your experiences in the club."

Will nodded hesitantly. He sat on the edge of the bed, dressed only in his robe, legs crossed at the knee. He was a gift waiting to be unwrapped, but Hannibal could be patient.

"He perverted those things for you," Hannibal said, taking Will's hands in his. He knelt before him, looking at him with a warm, fond smile. "I would like the chance to show you how certain things were meant to be experienced."

Will's hands tensed in his. He drew his bottom lip between his teeth, worrying the flesh pale. "I'm afraid," he admitted, his cheeks darkening. "But I… I trust you, Hannibal. I *want* to trust you."

“Beautiful, brave boy,” Hannibal praised, kissing his knuckles. “Would you let me bind you?”

Will’s breath came with a laugh alongside and he nodded, reassured by the warm eyes, by the familiar hands holding tight to his own.

Being bound physically had never really frightened Will. Even when Richard restrained him he used the proper knots to avoid blocking circulation or leaving cruel marks. But the thought that Hannibal would bind him, would be so near when Will couldn’t reach out and touch… oh, that was another sort of torment entirely, a blissful one.

Hannibal kissed Will’s wrists, whispered for him to undress while Hannibal himself remained fully clothed. This, too, Will had found that he enjoyed; it set his heart racing in pleasure-panic, being so bare when Hannibal was not. There was such a shift in power, and Will had noticed it was always in his favor.

He undressed as bidden, held his wrists for Hannibal to bind together, and found that instead, Hannibal reached for two silk ties instead of one. He knotted one each to Will’s wrists, checking the tightness and kissing over the pale skin suddenly so bright around the wine red fabric. He guided Will to lie on his back and knelt over him as he tied Will to his own bed. He used the legs, as there were no posts to work with, and kissed beneath Will’s jaw as he secured him, teasing shivers from his form.

Then, with a wicked glint in his eye, Hannibal kissed his way down Will’s body to bind his ankles just the same, spreading Will out on his bed, bound to every corner, vulnerable and open for Hannibal’s eyes to roam over.

Will’s heart beat heavy in his chest. He tested each knot in turn, but Hannibal knew well what he was doing. Though nothing hurt or pinched, there was no give either. Will could not bring his hands down to shield himself, nor close his thighs together. Hannibal ran a hand down Will’s chest, watching intently as Will’s breath hitched and his stomach jumped.

“I have told you before that I know how to spin pain into pleasure,” Hannibal said softly, “and I have seen the way your body responds in the early moments before things go too far.”

Will closed his eyes. There had been niceties once, for a moment. A week or two where a slap or a spank had seemed affectionate. “What if I don’t like it?” He asked in a soft, hesitant voice. There was always a moment when he expected cruelty from Hannibal, especially like this, as defenseless as he was.

Hannibal bent to kiss his forehead, lips warm against Will’s skin. “Then we’ll stop,” he promised, “we will always stop, if you don’t like it.”

Tension left Will in a rush. He felt dampness at the corners of his eyes. He was always overwhelmed by Hannibal, that a man like this could exist.

“It will look intimidating,” Hannibal warned, crossing the room to his bag. “I ask you to not be frightened. It will not hurt as badly as one might expect it to.”

“But it *will* hurt?”

Hannibal smiled, pulling a heavy candle and a matchbox from his bag. “Just enough, and no more,” he promised.

Will shivered, immediately tensing again at the sight of fire. Richard didn’t outright burn him, he had put out a few cigarettes against Will’s skin and left horrible marks behind but he’d never set him on fire. And Will was certain that Hannibal would not either, yet the base instincts that tickled the nape of his neck kicked in immediately, trying to curl away from a source of pain and danger, and finding bonds keeping him still.

Hannibal bent to kiss Will’s forehead again, nuzzling their noses together until Will’s breathing eased. “Anytime you want,” he reminded him. “You tell me to stop and I will, always.”

Will nodded, eyes on Hannibal as he pulled away and sat on the edge of the bed, lighting the candle. It looked like the candles Will had seen at church as a boy and the thought made him flush. Hannibal smiled as though knowing exactly what he was thinking about.

“Beeswax burns hot,” Hannibal explained as he let the wick flicker, melting the first of the wax as he spoke. “Much too hot for your beautiful skin. So I’ve brought one of paraffin. Have you ever had wax spilled on you, Will?”

Will shook his head. “Not deliberately.”

“We’ll start gently.” Hannibal told him, shifting to kneel on the bed, holding the candle up just above the back of his own hand. He tilted it, allowed a few drops to land on his skin and watched them turn from shiny to matte as they solidified. He looked to Will, another silent promise that while pain would be there, it would not be torturous, and at his nod moved the candle to hover over Will next.

“Wax is a curious substance,” he explained, lifting the candle higher, half a body’s length away from Will’s trembling skin, not right over it. “The longer it falls, the faster it cools, and yet -” he let the candle tilt, releasing a drop or three to land with gentle splashes just around Will’s nipple. “Always hotter than our blood runs.”

Will gasped, instinct making him twitch. The sharp heat was gone as quick as it had come, leaving a spreading warmth around his nipple. He tilted his head, staring at the wax solidifying on his skin. It had seemed like it would be far more unbearable.

Hannibal startled him with a splash just below the other nipple, this one hotter, a sting that seemed to echo through Will.

“Pay attention,” Hannibal teased. Will gaped at him, for a moment at a loss for words.

But then the words came, clear, crisp, *obvious.* Words that should have belonged to Hannibal, and Hannibal alone.

“I’m sorry, Sir.”

For a heartbeat, Hannibal merely stared. Then, candle held awkwardly out of the way, he bent to steal a kiss from parted lips.

“You will be the death of me,” he swore when he pulled back. Will’s answering smile was shy.

Hannibal painted a path down Will’s chest, higher and cooler alternating with lower and burning. He cupped Will’s hardening length in his hand, holding it out of the way to splash a teasing heat just above the coarse curls between Will’s thighs.

Will was trembling, despite the heat that landed on him. Goosebumps skidded over his skin as Hannibal continued the teasing torment. And it was teasing, it made Will arch up and tense his muscles, hold his breath and gasp out when Hannibal finally poured the wax he had held aloft.

He bit his lip and grinned at the ceiling. He yelped, squirming, when Hannibal let drops run into each other like a long drag down the inside of one hairless thigh.

“How does it feel?”

“It tickles,” Will admitted, closing his eyes as Hannibal’s fingers pressed to smear the still-warm wax over Will’s skin where it had landed. “I almost expect it to be too hot and it’s not, it’s -” Will sighed, turning his head against his arm to nuzzle. “It feels nice. It feels really nice.”

“You look beautiful,” Hannibal told him softly, bringing the candle up again to drip over Will’s nipples. He covered them entirely, watched the wax harden as Will squirmed and smiled. “Obedient, pretty little thing, look how brave you are.”

“Thank you, Sir,” Will whispered into his shoulder, biting his lip as his cheeks flushed. It felt good saying it here, it felt right. His cock hardened at the thought that Hannibal would be the only man to ever hear that from Will, the only man he would ever call master…

Hannibal groaned, voice rough, aroused, low, as he set the candle to the tiny side table and crawled up Will’s body, holding himself over him, not yet touching. When he did, he reached to gently peel the wax from one peaked nipple, immediately sucking it into his mouth when it was free. The other he teased around where the wax had landed, teasing a nail over the drops enough to crack the surface but not touch skin.

One sensation sharp, the other muted, both overwhelming. Will arched into Hannibal’s mouth, tugging uselessly at his bound limbs. Hannibal grazed his teeth over Will’s nipple, and then gently bit at it, increasing the pressure until Will cried out.

“One day, I will tease you red,” Hannibal murmured, peeling away the wax from the other nipple, “and see if you can come just from how sensitive you are here.”

He sucked the bud between his lips before Will could answer, his hands wandering down Will’s sides, over his hips, feeling out the spread of his thighs.

“Please,” Will gasped, “Please, Sir, I need you.” He was flush down to his chest, arousal coloring him. Hannibal pulled away with a final, playful nip, reaching for oil.

He did not unbind Will for their joining. He liked the way Will squirmed for him, the way he tugged at each limb, trying to take control and forced to relinquish it all to Hannibal. Hannibal had dreamed of him this way, helpless and submissive, a feast for Hannibal to devour.

“Please, please, *please* -“ Will gasped, when the thick head of Hannibal’s cock finally eased into him. Hannibal teased him with it, pulling out and then thrusting shallowly back into his willing body, never more than an inch or two. Will groaned in frustration, head tossing back and forth. “You can’t,” he begged, “Sir, I need more.”

“Wait,” Hannibal told him gently, leaning over Will as he pulled out and rubbed their cocks together with gentle teasing shifts instead. “Wait for what I give you,”

Will shivered, blush burning his cheeks at the words, and the command… it had never sounded so wonderful, he had never wanted to obey anyone more. He turned his head back to Hannibal and nodded, releasing his lip when Hannibal bent to kiss him, working his lips open, breathing in his gasp as Hannibal guided himself between Will’s legs again.

“What do you want, sweet boy?”

“I want your cock in me, sir,” Will whispered. Hannibal hummed, rocking in teasingly again just to watch Will squirm. “Deep - deep in me, sir, please, I want you to take me, I want to feel you for days…”

Hannibal gave him just the head again, licking the whine from his mouth, and then, as Will started to squirm again, he rocked his hips forward in a quick snap.

Will’s cry was beautiful, breathy and high. Hannibal worked one sound after another from him, rough with Will in a way he’d only rarely been. He gripped Will’s hip tight with one hand, the other finding his nipples again, pinching and teasing.

Will was trapped, helpless. He had no choice but to take each sensation, each brutal thrust and sharp pinch. He shook beneath Hannibal, cock leaking against his stomach as Hannibal made him ache.

“Gonna come,” he warned. It had taken so little, with Will’s mind racing as it was. He *belonged* to Hannibal, like this, he was Hannibal’s to bind and hurt and fuck. “Sir, I’m so close!”

“I won’t stop,” Hannibal warned, “If you ask, I will, but otherwise I will fuck you right through it and keep seeking my own pleasure.”

Will threw his head back with a sob, fists white knuckled around the ties that bound him. His body jerked once, twice beneath Hannibal’s, and then he was coming, pulses of pleasure forced out of him with every grind over the spot inside him.

“Filthy boy,” Hannibal breathed against Will’s throat, and his cock twitched painfully from those words alone. Nothing sounded degrading from Hannibal’s lips, nothing sounded derogatory and humiliating. He was Hannibal’s desperate, and sweet, and needy, and filthy, and slutty boy. He was *Hannibal’s* .

“I wonder if I can make you come again for me,” Hannibal added, amused when Will’s response was to try to close his legs, to squirm away. He could read the boy so well, now. Knew immediately when a response was genuine or in play, when Will was nervous or uncomfortable, when something hurt properly, or in a way it wasn’t meant to. He knew. And the body beneath him was aching for more.

He grasped Will’s hair and pulled, arching his neck, leaning over him to meet Will’s eyes as he continued thrusting shallowly within him. They had started to push their play more and more, Hannibal teaching Will to understand how play and pain should feel. The first time Hannibal had slapped him Will had almost come on the spot. It felt nothing like Richard’s fumblings and beatings, it felt like worship.

“I think I can,” Hannibal continued, drawing his tongue up over Will’s throat and behind his ear, tugging the lobe teasingly as Will whimpered. “Always so greedy for me when I’m here, taking anything I want to give you.”

“Yes,” Will gasped, lifting his hips to try and encourage Hannibal to push harder. “Yes, please -”

“Always so polite, too,” Hannibal praised him, free hand seeking Will’s sensitive nipples again. “And such lovely sounds you make for me… tell me little one, will you come for me again?”

“Oh god….” Will’s voice pulled high and sweet, his body rolling through shudders. His eyes fluttered closed, his thighs clung as tight to Hannibal’s hips as the bindings would allow.

The things Hannibal called him always settled heavy in his head, coaxing him closer and closer to that trusting, safe place that had always been just out of reach. Will reached for it now, tensing as Hannibal’s thrusts pushed him past the limits of his body into something entirely new.

Hannibal’s teeth grazed over his pulse, too light to leave a mark that might be noticed, but just heavy enough to leave Will whimpering. “That’s not an answer, lovely boy.”

“Yes,” Will gasped. “Yes, I will, Master, *please* -“

Hannibal pressed to him, heavy over Will, framing his face with his hands as he kissed him. The words coiled his spine, drove Hannibal harder into the boy beneath him. He had never expected of Will the kind of things Richard did. He had not intended to push Will into such things once he understood how one-sided the experience was for him.

And yet…

He would be a liar if he claimed he hadn't wanted to hear those words from Will's lips. They sounded like a prayer, tasted like manna from heaven. Hannibal fucked into Will harder, taking his pleasure from him and tasting the sweet little whimpers Will fed him back. When Hannibal came, Will was still hard between them, trembling, sobbing as he bit his lip and turned his face against the sheets.

Hannibal kissed the corner of his eye, his cheek, soothed fingertips over Will's jaw until the boy laughed, helpless and small.

"I've got you, dear thing," Hannibal promised. "I've got you, Will, let go for me. Let go and let me catch you."

Will squirmed, rocking himself shallowly on Hannibal's softening cock, his own rubbing against Hannibal's belly in short little thrusts. Hannibal let him wriggle like that until his cheeks were red and his whimpers grew desperate. Only then did he slip a hand between them, coiling his fingers around Will's sensitive cock, pulling the foreskin back to tease at the head.

Will shook beneath him, overwhelmed with sensation. His body pulled taught as he gave himself over to the pleasure, spilling hot over his own belly.

"Beautiful boy," Hannibal praised, wringing every last drop from Will until his little noises turned to wordless protest. He pulled himself from Will's body, undoing the ties and kissing at the red marks Will's struggles had left. "They'll fade," he promised, when alarm began to chip away at Will's drifting bliss. "No bruising. They'll be gone before you rise in the morning."

"I want you to bruise me," Will admitted. He sounded so small when he said it. Hannibal wanted to scoop him up and make promises Will would never allow.

"I'll pay him double," he said instead. "Richard can count his coin and I'll count my seconds. My prize is infinitely more precious."

Will turned his face against Hannibal to nuzzle him, brought his knees up to fold himself small so Hannibal could envelope him in his arms and keep him safe. He sighed and dozed, feeling Hannibal's hands stroke over his skin, caressing him, worshiping him, loving him.

"You don't owe me that title," Hannibal murmured after a while. Will blinked himself awake. "I'd never ask that of you, Will."

With a hum, Will let his eyes close again, pressing a chaste little kiss to Hannibal's throat. "Which is proof in itself you should have it." He nosed against Hannibal's pulse, breathed him in, warm and secure and safe. "Masters earn respect, they don't have to beat it into someone."

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

“You can’t see me like this,” Will whispered.

“But I can enjoy you.”

The affair continues...

Chapter Notes

Torture device warnings for this chapter: street sweeper's daughter

Will opened the letters only on the rare days when he didn’t see Hannibal, those days when Richard laid claim to him in blood and tears and there was no one to soothe away his aches.

The drawings made him flush; seeing himself the way Hannibal saw him was a treasure beyond words, but also slightly embarrassing. The boy in the pictures was beautiful, sensual in some of them.

One picture was outright lewd. Will had folded that one back up immediately with a choked sound, only to peer curiously at it a moment later. If Hannibal wanted him to sit astride, he need only have asked.

The words, though, the words were what Will clutched to his heart.

My dearest, Hannibal called him, *the candle burns low. I have written you half a dozen letters already this evening, yet I could not stay my hand from writing another. I should long since be asleep, and yet I cannot find rest without you, the softness of your smile when you drift off, the way you steal the covers if I do not keep you close and warm.*

Tomorrow, I’ll bring you these letters, and you will laugh and flush red for me, insisting that I write too many of the damned things. And yet you will smile, with open pleasure, and I will come home and write a half dozen more.

If Bedelia found Hannibal’s new unexplained interest in social gatherings curious, she never said anything. She merely ordered more champagne and canapes and watched Hannibal attempt to find more places to hang useless tapestries. When he approached her with a

request - the only, she noted, he had ever made of her - she acquiesced with a roll of her eyes and a tilt of her head so Hannibal could kiss her cheek.

That evening, Richard was at Will's side for perhaps an hour before he was waylaid by the hostess and her friends, curious to hear about his exploits in the oil industry overseas.

When Hannibal passed behind Will and gently tugged his sleeve, Will followed. But instead of the tapestry, Hannibal led his boy further down the corridor and to the staircase instead.

"Hannibal -"

"Trust me," Hannibal whispered, kissing Will's cheek and gently tugging him to follow.

Will did trust him, but his hesitance when he was pulled into Hannibal's opulent bedroom was obvious. "Richard-"

"Is already taken care of," Hannibal assured him, slowly undoing the buttons that held Will in his clothes.

"Your wife-"

"Has her own quarters and her own lovers." Hannibal pulled WIll's shirt open and pressed a kiss just above his collarbone. "I want to make love to you in a real bed, sweet boy, not that pitiful thing you sleep in."

And indeed, the bed was a sprawling thing. When Will was bared to the room, still looking hesitantly towards the door, Hannibal backed him onto it. He laid Will down in a heap of pillows and pulled the tassels so that the bed curtains surrounded them in blackness.

"You can't see me like this," Will whispered.

"But I can enjoy you."

Will grinned at him, reaching up blindly to find Hannibal already so near, spreading his legs to welcome the doctor between them. It had been several weeks since Hannibal had bound Will to his bed and Will had called him Master, and yet it felt like moments and years at the same time. Will was addicted to him; to the way he smelled, the way he dressed, his accent that curled around Will's terribly common name like it was something exotic and rare.

And in this bed, enormous and warm and smelling like his lover, Will bit his lip and squirmed beneath him, suddenly confident, suddenly playful.

They had seen each other at the club perhaps twice, and Hannibal inhabited Will's thoughts every moment of every day. More and more, Will called him 'sir', more and more, Will would drop a hand between his legs when alone in bed and think of Hannibal's voice against his skin and his breath in his hair and come hard, dripping with the fantasies overwhelming him.

"I like being enjoyed," Will ventured, tilting his head back for Hannibal to kiss beneath his jaw. His eyes were adjusting to the gloom now and he could see Hannibal better. His heart

beat quick behind his ribs and he ventured forth a request: “would you play with me, Sir?”

Hannibal reached for Will’s hips, the jut of his hipbones, the curve of his thighs. “Do you want me to make you beg, sweet boy? Make you hurt and squirm and come for me?”

“Yes, Sir.” Will’s smile brightened his voice. Hannibal could hear the pleasure in it. He let his hands roam, cupping Will’s backside gently.

“Are you still marked up, little one? Do you have bruises here that I can deepen?”

They had to be so very careful, but they’d learned that if Will was already marked, Richard was unlikely to notice a change in the pattern. Will almost looked forward to punishments now, knowing that Richard was only leaving more places for Hannibal to touch him.

“I got a whipping this morning,” Will confided, and even the way Hannibal’s hands tightened on his body was a pleasure. Hannibal’s desire to protect him brought warmth blossoming in his chest.

“What was his excuse this time?” Hannibal growled.

“I didn’t look as happy to see him as I should have.”

Hannibal’s sound of displeasure deepened, vibrating through his chest to Will’s and the young man squirmed happily under him. It delighted Hannibal how quickly Will had opened up to being that confident and lovely boy Hannibal had met at the party first. He could only imagine the beauty Will had been when he had come to the club consensually. He wished he had been there for it.

Sometimes, the two of them found ways to reenact experiences Will had had, cementing them in his memory as ones with Hannibal. Sometimes, they overwrote cruelties dealt him, and Hannibal turned those tortures into pleasures. Perhaps now would be the time for the latter…

Hannibal grasped Will’s hips and rolled them, bringing the boy up above him as he lay beneath. He dropped a hand back behind his head and regarded the pretty young thing perched on his lap. Will’s smile was winsome, beautiful, teeth almost bright in the dim space they had made for themselves.

“Your word, sweetling,” Hannibal asked, tracing his fingers over Will’s nipples as the boy shivered. He was so sensitive there.

“Pomegranate,”

“Good boy,” Hannibal stroked his palm possessively over Will’s chest and belly, before moving it back up to catch Will’s hair and tug it, sitting up to bring them nose to nose. “You made me ask twice to get you upstairs today. You know how I don’t like that, Will.”

“I’m sorry, Sir.” He was not. He was practically vibrating with excitement astride Hannibal, and he was all the more beautiful for his eagerness.

“Did you not want to come up and play with me? Did you think reluctance could keep you from me?”

From Richard, words such as these would freeze Will in place. From Hannibal, they were a game. A tease. Will shivered, eyes fluttering closed as he let them wash over him. “No, Sir, of course not.”

Hannibal’s lips caressed his throat, deceptively gentle. “Are you lying to me, little one?”

“N-no, Sir.” Will ached. He was sure Hannibal could feel him, hard against his belly and so eager to be touched, but Hannibal merely tugged at his hair again.

“I don’t believe you. Naughty little creature.” Hannibal hauled him up, moving him with ease, as if he weighed nothing at all. His strength always made Will dizzy, and he found himself rutting down into Hannibal’s lap when he was draped over it.

“Naughty boys need to be reminded of their place, don’t they?” Hannibal was saying, setting himself up comfortably against the headboard as he let himself look at Will. He reached to tug open one of the curtains, enough to let a stream of light from the room beyond lay warm and golden over Will’s form. He’d been belted or strapped, from the look of the bruises, so Hannibal wouldn’t lay more than a hand on him this evening.

But a hand he would certainly lay.

With a sharp swat against Will’s thigh, he drew one of his knees up, encouraging Will to push up onto all fours over him. “Answer me, Will.”

“Yes, Sir, naughty boys need to be reminded of their place.” Will repeated, breathless, a giggle catching him at the end that he couldn’t hide no matter how he tried to. Hannibal hummed, rubbing his palm over Will’s ass, squeezing the cheeks, holding him open until Will was trembling over him.

“And where is your place, dear boy?”

Will’s moan shivered from him. “In your bed, Sir.”

“That’s right,” Hannibal praised gently, hand still deceptively soft over Will’s skin as he just touched him. “Your place is in my bed, eager and aching for Master, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” Will whined, receiving a hard slap against his sore bottom that drew a yelp from him. “Sir! Yes, sir!”

“Spread your legs.” Hannibal immediately slipped a hand between them when Will did, stroking his cock already hard and thick and ready for him before cupping his balls. “To your elbows, little one, you know the position Master likes.”

Will dropped with a soft moan, tucking his face into the bedding. Immediately, Hannibal grabbed him by the hair, tugging until his back arched almost painfully.

“Don’t you hide your noises from me, boy. They belong to me just as much as the rest of you.”

“Yes, Master.” Will could barely breathe with how aroused he was, how ready for the first swat. His cock hung heavy and distracting over Hannibal’s lap, and he realized with embarrassment that if he came like this, it would be all over Hannibal. He tensed, trying to reign in his need, and that was when Hannibal struck him the first time.

A startled cry filled Hannibal’s room, a sound he would hear every time he closed his eyes in this bed. He struck Will again, to see the lovely way he dropped lower and pushed his beautiful backside into Hannibal’s hand.

The old sting made the new burn all the brighter. Will spread his thighs a little wider, trembling as a bead of fluid dripped from his cock onto Hannibal’s thigh.

“Are you enjoying this?” Hannibal asked, delivering two sharp swats to Will’s thighs. “Terrible thing, making a mess of yourself just from being punished.”

“I’m sorry, Sir,” Will whimpered, squirming as Hannibal spanked him again and squeezed the aching skin hard.

“Is this why you act up, then?” Hannibal continued, releasing Will only to strike him on the same spot with a harsh hand. “Is this why I rarely see my good boy anymore?”

“N-no, Sir, I swear -” Will’s voice broke as Hannibal drew nails cruelly over punished skin. His cock was dripping more and more, pearlescent fluid clinging to Hannibal’s trousers, some already soaking into the fabric. Will thought of how Hannibal would need to change, would have to have his clothes laundered because Will had made a mess of them -

“Sir, please -!”

“If you come from this, you will be a very, very bad boy indeed,” Hannibal told him, watching, amused, as Will’s cock twitched between his aching thighs, as he rocked incrementally back and forth as though seeking friction from the air. He smelled divine, and Hannibal had already pulled his voice so tight from just this alone…

He imagined what a beauty the boy would be if Hannibal had a clean canvas to work with, bending his sweet boy bare over his desk, kicking his feet wide and painting his pale ass and thighs with welts of the cane, outlines of his hand, wide swaths of bruises from the belt…

He slipped a hand between them and tweaked a nipple, twisting it gently as he struck Will again, relishing the aching cry he pulled from his boy. “And how would I punish my bad, bad boy then, sweetling? If a spanking arouses him so.” he spanked Will again, twisted a little harder, and grinned when Will came with a helpless cry, thick and quick against Hannibal’s clothed thighs.

He clicked his tongue, rubbing a thumb up against the back of Will’s balls. “What a mess you’ve made…”

Will gasped for breath, his sweaty forehead pressed into the bedding, his thighs quivering. They would have to arrange for him to 'trip' into the garden fountain after this, to hide the mess, but it wouldn't be the first time they'd gotten out of hand. "I'm sorry, Sir. I didn't mean to."

"You did," Hannibal said, applying gentle pressure to Will's perineum and greedily drinking in his soft moan. "You're a greedy thing, aren't you?"

Will shuddered, rolling his hips back into the touch, slightly too much, just as he liked it. "I'm your greedy slut, Master." He hid a smile in the sheets, drawing in a shaky breath when Hannibal's thumb found his entrance, rubbing dry over the tight clench, easing in just enough to make Will squeak.

"A greedy slut indeed," Hannibal murmured. "And greedy sluts need cock, don't they? They can't be left empty for too long."

"No, Sir."

Hannibal pinched lightly over the curve of Will's backside. "Up, then, sweetling. Prepare yourself with the oil while I clean up the mess you've made. Then you can have the fucking you need."

Will shivered but obeyed, pushing himself up and sitting back on his heels. When Hannibal reached to catch his chin, he went eagerly, mouth open and wet for Hannibal to claim. Will loved this. He loved everything Hannibal did with him. He'd been naive when he met Richard, certainly, but he had never lost hope, however slightly, that perhaps being submissive *was* meant to feel this good, *was* meant to be so empowering.

Will stroked trembling fingertips over Hannibal's face and nuzzled him when Hannibal let him go.

"Thank you, Sir."

"Filthy boy," Hannibal breathed, shifting to get off the bed so Will could move to obey. The oil was on the bedside table, and Hannibal allowed himself to look as Will's slim arm reached from within the curtain to claim it. God, if only that was something Hannibal could see nightly, daily, every moment of every hour.

"On your back with your legs spread," Hannibal added after a moment, stepping back to yank the curtain open, revealing Will to the room. The boy's blush was blissful.

"Yes, Sir," Will smiled, moving to lay back as he'd been told, setting his feet deliberately wide and watching Hannibal between them as he dripped some oil to his fingertips. He watched Hannibal undress, watched him move to his closet to seek a pair of pants of similar make and set them aside over the back of a chair along with his shirt and vest. He watched and he fingered himself, slipping just the tip of a third finger into himself as he stretched the aching muscle.

When Hannibal looked back at him, Will grinned, ducking his head in a way that was almost coy, almost shy, if he wasn't so obscenely spread, with his little cock half hard already. Hannibal growled softly, a deeply possessive sound, and stepped closer, pleased when Will continued to touch - Hannibal hadn't told him to stop.

"How should Master fuck his dirty boy?" he asked Will, eyes narrowing when the question fluttered the boy's eyelids and pushed a gasp from his throat. "Just like this? Your legs spread wide for anyone to fit between?"

Will arched his back, hips up off the bed as though to welcome Hannibal inside. Hannibal shoved him back down with a smirk.

"On your hands and knees, perhaps? A whining animal in need of taming?"

"Sir, *please* ," Will whined, sliding his fingers out and holding himself spread to show off his stretched entrance.

Hannibal crawled onto the bed, right between Will's spread thighs. Will pulled his hands away, eagerly reaching for Hannibal instead.

"Perhaps you owe me gratitude." Hannibal grabbed Will's wrists, pinning them effortlessly beside his head. "Perhaps you should thank your Master for the orgasm you stole without consequences."

Will was already nodding when Hannibal grabbed him by the hips and rolled them, settling into his back with Will astride him.

When Will hesitated, Hannibal spanked his thigh again, smiling up at the little yelp that drew. Will was breathless, still dizzy from his orgasm, still filthy with it. And now he felt Hannibal's cock hard against his back, teasing him every time he shifted, and he *ached* for it. Wriggling back, Will wrapped his fingers around Hannibal and knelt up to guide himself down onto his cock.

Since he lost his virginity, Will had been fucked every which way. Strange positions and common ones, hard and rough as well as gently. Often it was unsatisfying. Sometimes it was satisfying enough. But nothing had ever felt as good as when Hannibal fucked him. Will moaned shamelessly as he sank down, taking Hannibal slowly but all the way in, thighs spread wide over his stomach. Hannibal ran his palms up and down Will's thighs, thumbs teasing the curve of his hip but never touching Will's cock.

"Thank you, Sir," Will whispered, biting his lip as he tensed and relaxed around Hannibal, not yet moving to push himself up. "For bringing me so much pleasure."

Hannibal hummed, playing at indifference, and lifted his chin. "Touch yourself. Let Master see what his cock does to his terrible boy."

The permission made Will hungry. He drifted a hand over his chest, teasing his nipples as he began to rock himself slowly on Hannibal's cock. His other hand played at his inner thighs, slipping higher to touch the place where they were joined.

“God, Master,” he moaned, feeling Hannibal’s cock slip slowly in and out of his body, filling him up so intimately.

Hannibal’s gaze was nearly black with desire. He let Will take the lead, watching him wrap a hand around his own cock, increasing his pace until he was practically bouncing in Hannibal’s lap. His lips parted around breathless cries, his thighs trembling as each drop shoved Hannibal deep into his willing body.

“You’re so beautiful,” Hannibal said, reaching up to cup Will’s cheek. Will tilted his head into the touch, covering Hannibal’s hand with one of his own.

“Master, I-“ Will cut himself off with a shudder, grinding his hips against Hannibal’s to feel that sweet pressure again.

“I know,” Hannibal assured him, setting a hand to Will’s hip to guide him as he kept up the frantic pace, as he took Hannibal so beautifully. He was a dream, an absolute vision. Hannibal would turn the world inside out if Will asked it of him. Were he free, Hannibal would have courted Will on his knees, uncaring who saw.

The boy was *his* , they both knew it.

“What do you want, sweet boy?” Hannibal asked him. “Tell Master what you need to come.”

“Oh,” Will bit his lip and let it go with a whimper. He was already so close, and he knew that after his second orgasm he would need several moments to get back to himself as he floated. “Touch me, Sir, please. I want… I need your hands.”

Hannibal reached for him, slid his palm up from Will’s hip to press to his chest, to wrap his fingers around Will’s throat - tight enough to feel but not to hurt. His other freed itself from beneath Will’s to drop between his legs, cupping his palm over Will’s cock for him to rut into.

“Come on, Will,” he breathed. “You invade my thoughts, you interrupt my rest, I *ache* for you.”

“Please, Hannibal, I -”

“Such a slutty thing for me,” Hannibal continued, knowing what the word did to Will, when said properly, when aimed where they should have been. “So tight around my cock, riding it so well, taking me so deep, wanton thing.”

“ *Oh* -”

“One day,” Hannibal promised, breathless beneath Will. “I will take you apart. I will tie you to this bed and fuck you breathless. I will whip you raw and you will beg me for more, won’t you?”

“Yes.”

“You’ll cry for me -”

‘Yes!”

“You’ll come, as many times as I want you to -”

“Yes, please, *fuck* -”

“You will be *mine,* every piece of you.”

Will cried out, his release spilling over Hannibal’s hand. His motions grew jerky and strained, tightening rhythmically around Hannibal. Hannibal rolled them again, fucking into Will in rough, almost violent thrusts, until Will was sobbing and Hannibal could no longer hold back his own climax.

In the aftermath, he brushed Will’s curls softly from his face, planting sweet kisses over his cheeks, his forehead.

“He’s going to kill me,” Will murmured, making no move to leave the bed.

“By now, Bedelia has plied him with half the wine cellar. He’ll pass out on one of the chaise lounges and need to be carted into his carriage. He’ll never know you were gone.”

“Mmm, you spoil me, Sir.”

Hannibal tucked his face into the crown of Will’s head, breathing in deeply. “Not nearly enough, sweetling.”

Will had opened piles and piles of letters by now, but this one might have been his favorite. He laid himself out in his bed, resting gingerly on his stomach to avoid the marks across his back, and smiled weakly at the self-portrait Hannibal had drawn of himself.

Dearest boy, the letter it had come with had read, *my hands have drawn infinite sketches of your likeness and none of them do you justice. You are my Hyacinth, my Hadrian. Were I able, I would spirit you away to me and never let you out of my sight. I would spoil you with literature, feed you sweets from my fingers, lavish you with gifts. I would hold you, and listen to you speak. I would love you, again and again.*

In the sketch, Hannibal had made himself a little older, and Will wondered if he realized he’d done it. He’d concentrated on the lines at the corners of his eyes, at the corners of his lips, the silver that snuck into the golden strands of his hair. He had, without knowing it, drawn the things Will found most beautiful about him.

Setting the portrait beneath his pillow, Will turned his face into it and wept.

Richard’s penchant for medieval torture was what drew so many men to purchase Will from him. He endured what other boys shuddered to even think of, let alone try. This evening, he had Will bound up tight, arms to his chest, knees to his arms, balled up and held tense with a thick leather strap. He could barely breathe, just as Richard had wanted.

“It’s an appropriate one for you,” he’d said as he’d shoved Will to his knees that evening. “The Street Sweeper’s Daughter. You’re forgetting yourself lately. You’re forgetting what you are without me.”

Thus far, Will had choked on Richard’s cock and had another man fuck him, and he *ached* . This could go on all night if Richard was in a mood and Will wasn’t sure he would be able to stretch the crick out of his neck for weeks after.

There were whispers going around. Richard had promised him that he’d be fucked by any man who offered, that he’d halved the price for the night to ensure Will was thoroughly shown his place.

Will had another man in his mouth, bending his neck painfully to fit, when he heard Hannibal’s arrival. He felt like he was attuned to him, like his entire body woke up when Hannibal walked into a room.

“A new game, then?” Hannibal asked.

“I know you like your privacy,” Richard said with a laugh, “but the lesson sticks better if he’s been thoroughly displayed for it. He hates when everyone can see what a naughty whore he’s been.”

A grunt, Hannibal’s version of false approval. Will heard the jingle of a coin purse. “How much to fill him up like this?

“Half your usual, but I’ll tell you what.” Richard bent, grabbing Will by the hair and yanking him off the cock in his mouth. The man cursed, his seed spilling over Will’s cheeks rather than down his throat. Richard laughed at Will’s disgusted face. “This man gets to have you for free, little bitch. A treat for our best customer. Not even a whore anymore, are you? Whores get paid. You’re just a hole at this point.”

Will gazed up at Hannibal, filthy, embarrassed, degraded and sore, and felt like he’d been plunged into a warm bath. He didn’t want to lick his lips, didn’t want to taste anyone but Hannibal against them.

“Please use me, Sir,” he managed, coughing when Richard shoved him down again, pressing his forehead to the stone floor to raise his hips.

“It will certainly be my pleasure to,” Hannibal replied.

It was rare that he allowed himself to partake so publicly. Less to do with his image and more because he was a private person in general. He preferred his sex to be the same. Regardless, Hannibal freed his cock and stroked it, looking over Will’s painfully bent form as he did, before kneeling behind him.

“You just never learn, do you?” He told Will, knowing that Richard already assumed Hannibal hurt his boy, already assumed he raped him. Knowing that to Will, the words would be a balm, rather than a cruelty. “If you aren’t good for your Master, what good are you?”

Will was already stretched, already leaking from his red entrance, and Hannibal angled himself in such a way as to appear to shove in forcefully, when instead he took his time. Hannibal set a hand to the stone ground, keeping his weight off Will, and grasped the boy's hair with the other to bring him close enough to whisper in his ear.

"That man there," Hannibal breathed, loud enough only for Will to hear. "He is *nothing* . He is a hole, a void, festering and growing." Will whimpered, eyes closing as he listened, as he felt Hannibal in him, around him. They had never fucked in public, they had never been this intimate in front of Richard. It terrified and aroused him.

"You are so beautiful in your suffering," Hannibal continued, hitching Will up just enough to rub against his prostate with every deliberate shove into him. He drew his teeth over Will's jaw possessively, snarling in a way that appeared cruel to those watching. "Remember that you're suffering for *me* , never for him. You're mine, aren't you little one?"

"Yes," Will whined, wet and breathless.

"You're my sweet boy. Mine to punish. Mine to love. Mine to *fuck* ."

Will's moan was strangled by the compression, sounding more pained than pleasured. Trapped between his thighs and belly, his cock pulsed wave after wave of his release, the climax taking both of them off guard.

Hannibal's facade was more believable now, with every thrust drawing a strangled, overstimulated whine from Will. Yet even now, it was as though it was just the two of them, just Will being properly claimed by the only Master he would ever truly belong to.

"Friday night," Hannibal told him, "be bare when I come for you." And then, because he *could* , here, Hannibal sank his teeth into Will's shoulder, his own climax rolling through him as Will wailed.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Will swallowed, shaking his head and bringing a hand up to wipe away angry tears.

It was enough for Hannibal. He leaned in to kiss Will's forehead, lifted his chin to kiss Will on the lips. "My darling boy," Hannibal told him, nuzzling him softly. "My sweet, brave boy. I'm taking you away from here."

Warnings for this chapter it starts off with a fairly violent rape scene where Will is the victim; Whiskey's trying a new HTML coding to help you skip it, so if it works just click the "skip" link, if not, then scroll to the first page break. BUT Richard gets his comeuppance in this one, we promise.

Chapter Notes

Torture devices in this chapter: scold's bridle and pear of anguish.

A huge huge HUGE thank you and welcome to our new Beta, Alex!

[skip scene]

It wasn't uncommon for Will to be woken roughly. Sometimes Richard just fucked into him. Other times, he dragged Will from sleep with a slap or a spank to already painful skin, demanding attention.

That morning, Will was dragged from bed by his hair, crying out in genuine pain as he fell hard and hurt his tailbone, legs weak and kicking against the rug, hands up to catch Richard's hand.

"What—"

"Shut up, you *trollop* , you ungrateful piece of *shit* ."

Will's hip struck against a wall as Richard hauled him up and pressed his hand to Will's throat. Will whimpered. He ached. He hurt so much from how long he had been folded into himself the evening before.

"Richard—"

The man slapped him, hard enough to ring in Will's ears. He hissed and bit his lip gently, not trying to speak again.

"You know, I have never seen you come for another before," Richard told him, tone conversational, almost soft. It made it all the more terrifying. "Not unless you're forced. Not unless I've *said* . But yesterday, you made a mess of yourself, blatantly, *shamelessly* , for *him* . And I find myself curious."

Another slap, almost harder than the first. "Why would my obedient little slut suddenly turn feral?"

Will brought his hands up and then froze. His breathing was raspy, but tugging at Richard's hands would only make him angrier, and so instead Will stood there, lightheaded, with tears brimming in the corners of his eyes.

"So I did some thinking," Richard said, pressing further into Will's space. "I thought to myself, what makes a man like Doctor Hannibal Lecter throw half his fortune away renting a useless whore?"

Will's heart pounded in his ears. He pushed up on his toes, trying to relieve some of the pressure on his throat, trying desperately to look less guilty than he was.

"Every time there's a party, he comes to say hello to you. Every time there's a party, I seem to be 'just missing you' whenever I come to find you." Richard's backhand caught an edge of his family ring against Will's cheekbone. Will yelped at the pain, feeling a trickle of blood ooze down his face.

"How long?"

"Richard, *please* —"

"How long?" Richard shouted. "How long have you been spreading your legs for him, when *I* am the one whoowns you, whocontrols every aspect of your life?"

"Just when you let me —"

"Don't *lie to me* , Will," Richard hissed. "Don't you do that. Don't make me do something I regret."

Will sobbed, teeth gritted and blood-smeared. This wasn't the first time he wondered if Richard was going to kill him, but it was the first time he was *scared* that he would do it.

"Just a — a few months, a few months, Richard, please, it doesn't mean anything, it doesn't —"

"A few *months* , Will?" Richard's hand tightened so much that Will choked, lips parted to try and get any air into his throat he could. "You filthy, scheming, revolting little bitch."

Richard released Will so abruptly, he slid down the wall coughing, massaging his fingers over the bruises he knew were coming; he could feel them beneath his skin. When Richard kicked

him, Will cried out, helpless and little, and curled up again.

“Do you really think that you, *you* ,” another kick, at Will’s ribs, at his shins, before Richard gripped Will’s hair and yanked him up, “would *matter* ? To *him* ?”

“Richard, please!”

Richard sank into a crouch before him, gripping Will’s chin so hard it grit his teeth together. “What did you call me?” His eyes flicked between Will’s, seeing the moment realization filled his terrified gaze. “Oh. Oh I see. You gave him that too.”

“No,” Will whispered, horror gripping him fierce enough to bring lies to his lips, “No, no, Master, I just panicked, I’m sorry —“

Richard’s first caught Will in the stomach, forcing all the breath from his lungs in a single pained wheeze. “And now you lie to me. You gave him things that weren’t yours to give, and you would look me in the eyes and swear you didn’t?”

He reached for Will’s throat again. Will threw himself back against the wall, lashing out in his panic, shoving Richard backwards. The both of them froze, staring at Will’s outstretched hands.

“You little *bitch* ,” Richard said, slow and dangerous as he pulled himself up to his full height. Will’s eyes darted around the room. He lunged for the door only to find himself caught around the waist and hauled back.

“And now you run,” Richard hissed in his ear, shoving him face first onto the bed. “Now you try to run from me, and where will you go? When I have all your money, the deed to your father’s home. When I have friends who would claim to have borne witness to your sins in front of a judge?” He wrapped a hand around Will’s throat and squeezed tight while Will flailed beneath him. “Would you like to be hanged, Will? You were so very earnest the first time you begged me to choke you.”

Will was crying, gasping for air, digging at the sheets and struggling, truly struggling for the first time in a long time. He felt like he was fighting for his life. He felt like if he didn’t, he was going to die. He was actually going to die.

“I hear they *love* sweet little boys in gaol, Will,” Richard continued, shoving Will’s legs apart and pushing his face into the pillow to smother him. “Your ass will be ruined by every Tom, Dick, and Harry there, and it will be *just* what you deserve.”

He didn’t bother stretching Will. He shoved into him hard, Will’s cry loud even through the pillow between his teeth. He yanked Will up just enough to allow him a gasp of air, just enough to draw his lips over Will’s jaw, as Hannibal had the night before.

“You are *mine* , Will, or you are *dead* , do you understand? I will make sure of it. And your lover? Your *savior* , your *Master* …you will end it. You will show him what you are, the filth beneath that smile of yours, and he will leave disgusted. Or I will kill *him* .”

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*

There were whispers when Hannibal arrived at the club, voices curling around him, eager men with their hands all over nervous boys. Something had the whole crowd on edge, buzzing with excitement.

He found Richard in his usual spot, surrounded by an enraptured crowd. Richard spotted him immediately, beaming as he pushed through people to clasp Hannibal's hand.

"Hannibal, my friend!" He said, blindingly, irritatingly cheerful. "I'm afraid the slut isn't for sale today, he's being soundly punished. But come, come take a look, you'll love this. You have such an eye for torments."

Hannibal's stomach dropped. He followed Richard through the crowd, to find Will, bound on the floor, sobbing.

The metal frame around his head caught the eye first. A scold's bridle, tightly shaped to Will's face, metal pinning his tongue and silencing him. He'd worn it long enough for drool to trail down his chin, unable to wipe it away with his arms chained behind his back.

The bridle, horrible as it was, was not what sparked Hannibal's fury.

Between his legs, spread obscenely wide by a bar, was what Hannibal could only equate to a pear of anguish. It would make sense, considering Richard's obsession with medieval torture. Hannibal could only hope that this was modified, that it wasn't an original item.

It gaped Will open painfully, enough to push an ache into his hips, Hannibal was certain. He wasn't bleeding, but it was a close thing. His skin was angry red, stretched shiny. Will's entire form was shaking, he was covered in sweat, and he wept openly. His wrists were bound cruelly tight in a single cuff instead of two, and chained to the floor.

Hannibal realized he wasn't breathing only when his chest burned with pain. When he took a breath, it shook in his lungs.

"Extraordinary," Hannibal managed, the word hissed between gritted teeth. He didn't look at Richard, he couldn't. He knew that if he saw him he would kill him. He would wring his neck. He would beat him to a pulp with his bare hands.

He looked at Will until Will looked back, and he held his gaze. He owed it to Will not to look away. He owed it to his boy not to leave him alone in this torture that he was taking for Hannibal. Will closed his eyes first, unable to be strong anymore, unable to be strong at all. His fingers stretched helpless where his wrists were bound, reaching for Hannibal, reaching for *anything* …

"I think I've been too patient with him," Richard said, coming to stand at Hannibal's side, holding out a glass of wine for him that Hannibal did not take. "I think my leniency is what led to him being such a disobedient thing. My fault for letting pity stand in the way of proper training."

“Naughty things need a strong hand to guide them,” Hannibal forced himself to say.

He stayed. He stayed when Richard jerked himself off over Will’s face, when he “cleaned” the mess by pouring his wine over Will as Will choked and gasped for breath. He kept his eyes open when Richard opened the pear just one more notch and drew a genuine scream from Will, terrified and trembling. When Richard smacked his backside roughly and said “shut up, you’re not even bleeding. But you could be.”

Hannibal stayed as long as he could, until Richard finally removed the pear and Will collapsed in a sobbing heap, until Richard waved dismissively and told them all the show was over. He left only when he could no longer stay, and every step killed him just a little bit more.

Hannibal had tried to come to Will that night, but Richard kept him up in the manor for the rest of the evening. He slept there the next night, as well. It was not until Friday, their original planned meeting, that Hannibal knocked at the cottage door and received an answer.

Will opened the door bare, as Hannibal had asked, but clearly not by choice. Behind him, Hannibal could see that the cottage had been ransacked, the dresser drawers hanging empty. Will bore bruises over nearly every inch of his skin, including mottled black ones over his ribs. He rattled when he walked, a long chain connecting him from the bed to a thick, tight metal collar constricting his throat. Just long enough to open the door for his Master.

Will looked up at Hannibal with tired, red eyes, and in a choked whisper, said, “He wanted to make sure I couldn’t hide behind any more tapestries.”

Hannibal didn’t know how to touch him. He didn’t know where he could without hurting Will more. He stepped in and Will immediately jerked back a step himself, shaking his head with a pained little laugh when he did. He licked his lips, he looked over Hannibal’s shoulder, he crossed his arms over his middle and ducked his head, embarrassed.

“Will…”

“He, umm, Master was right to teach me to remember my place. I overstepped in assuming I was worthy of your time and attention, Dr. Lecter.”

“Will, please look at me.”

Will did, for a second, and then he looked away. “I’m a filthy whore,” Will recited, tone dead, cold, like the first time he had addressed Hannibal at the club when he’d bought him. “I have shamed your home by stepping into it. I have shamed you by dirtying your hands that touched me.”

“Will,” Hannibal stepped close again, trying to ignore the flinch when he did, and set his hand beneath Will’s chin to lift it. “My darling boy, I am so sorry.”

Will made a pained sound, closing his eyes and pursing his lips before forcing himself to take a deep breath and let it free.

“I seduced you,” he whispered, “I seduced you for the fun of it. I seduced you to see — see if I could. For greed, for your money, for —”

Hannibal kissed him, so softly, so gently, that Will sobbed at the feeling, turning his head away almost violently.

“Please, please don’t do this,” Will breathed. “I hate you, Doctor. You mean nothing to me.”

“Let me help you,”

“I hate you!” Will shouted, bringing his hands up to his face immediately to stifle the sound that followed. “You mean nothing, less — less than nothing, I —

Hannibal pulled the boy close to him, wrapping him in his arms as gently as he possibly could, guiding Will’s face to his shoulder, hushing his helpless wail of anguish. “I’ve got you, sweetling,” Hannibal whispered. “I’m not letting you go.”

“You have to go,” Will sobbed, though his fingers wrapped tight in Hannibal’s clothing, “you have to leave, you have to leave and never come back.”

“I won’t ever leave you again,” Hannibal said, hushing him. He guided Will towards the little bed, settling Will into his lap when he sat. “Head up, lovely, let me see what we have here.”

When Will faltered, panicked eyes on the floor, Hannibal cupped his chin and lifted it himself, inspecting the lock on the collar. Nothing too complicated. A moment’s work.

“You have to leave,” Will said again, shying away when Hannibal fingered the lock. “He’ll kill you.”

Hannibal snorted, despite the heavy mood. Richard was tall, but otherwise half his size. “I’d very much like to see him try.”

“No!” Will shouted. “No, you don’t understand! He has friends who will swear to our crimes. Who would have us arrested and imprisoned. He’d see me hanged, and you —”

But Hannibal’s fingers had tightened around the lock, and he was no longer listening. “Did he say that to you?” he said, voice slow and cold as ice.

“I…I…”

“Did he *threaten* you, Will? Worse than you’ve previously told me? Did he threaten your life?”

“He…he’s always promised to ruin me, to tell people —”

“Did he threaten your *life* , Will?”

Will swallowed. He thought back to the morning he’d been dragged from bed. He thought of how hard Richard had choked him. How hard he had kicked Will as he lay curled on the ground. How hard he’d flogged him when he’d dragged him to the house.

Pain, always so much pain with him…any memory of gentleness from Richard seemed like a fever dream, a desperate bid of Will's imagination to prove to him that he hadn't naively given himself to a man who hurt him so much. But then…then Will's exhaustion moved to anger.

"He told me what would happen to me in gaol," Will whispered, eyes in the middle distance. "He told me I would deserve what would be done to me. He told me he'd have me hanged… because I'd asked so nicely to be choked by him."

Will swallowed, shaking his head and bringing a hand up to wipe away angry tears.

It was enough for Hannibal. He leaned in to kiss Will's forehead, lifted his chin to kiss Will on the lips. "My darling boy," Hannibal told him, nuzzling him softly. "My sweet, brave boy. I'm taking you away from here."

The house was enormous, almost imposing with how empty it looked at nighttime. Will had clung to Hannibal despite how often he told him to wait outside. He'd put on whatever clothes he could find that were undamaged, was wrapped in Hannibal's cloak. He'd shown Hannibal where to find a key so they didn't have to break in, and they'd found themselves in the kitchen, towards the back of the house.

Empty.

Silent.

"The staff don't sleep here," Will whispered quietly. "He only keeps two on, he needs the privacy." He didn't say what Richard needed privacy for. Hannibal could infer it from the scars across Will's body.

Will led the way down dark halls, slipping into the study. Hannibal had picked the lock on the collar with almost ridiculous ease. That it could have been so simple, this whole time…

The documents entitling property and bank accounts to a Mr. William Harrison Graham, in care of Mr. Richard Emile DuBois, were kept in a tightly locked drawer in Richard's desk. He'd shown them to Will, shown him that the only thing keeping him from his property was a plank of wood. He'd found it hilarious.

Now, Will trembled in the doorway. It was hard to get past years of instinct, of training. He wasn't supposed to be in here, and he knew it, and he knew what the punishment would be if he were caught.

Richard had gotten worse in the past few months, but he'd *always* been enthusiastic about punishments.

"We should hurry," Will whispered, his hand shaking as he gripped the doorknob. "If he catches me in here…"

Hannibal stepped up to him, drawing knuckles down Will's cheek before cupping it. "He doesn't control you anymore, Will," he told him. "He will never lay a hand on you again."

Will still didn't enter the room, but he didn't cower. He took the papers Hannibal gave him and held them to his chest. He let his eyes slip over the objects within before looking away, leaving the house behind. It had never been his. He had never lived here; he had been used here.

After the study, Hannibal followed Will down the hall to the stairs where he stopped dead. Flanking the staircase were two halves of an original Iron Maiden. Rusty, dirty, heavy; Hannibal could smell the misery wafting off of it in waves. He didn't want to know if Will had ever been forced inside this device. He had enough to pay back Richard in kind already.

"Stay here," Hannibal told him. "Just tell me where to go."

"We can just leave," Will breathed. "We don't have to hurt him, we can just go —"

"He doesn't deserve to be left without consequence," Hannibal replied, setting his foot to the stair.

Will gripped the papers with sweaty hands, staring after Hannibal with wide eyes. His mind was screaming at him, old nightmarish thoughts, *be good be still be quiet if Master wakes up if he catches you —*

Hannibal was moving swiftly but quietly up the stairs. Will hastened after him, trepidation growing with each step.

"Will." Hannibal turned to him halfway up, cupping his face in both hands. Always such gentle hands. "My good boy. Go downstairs and wait for me, sweetling. I'll try not to be long."

"I have to go with you," Will insisted. "If you do this for me, I should be there."

"Will —"

"If you don't want me to come, then you have to go with me." Hannibal had never stopped Will from speaking his mind before, and Will felt emboldened by it in a way he never had before. "If you keep going, you take me with you."

Hannibal pressed their foreheads together, his eyes closed as he drew in a deep breath. "I only want to keep you safe."

"I'm safe if I'm with you."

The hallway upstairs was just as morbidly decorated as the house downstairs had been. Hannibal saw the scold's bridle on a stand beneath an ornate lamp. Several steps away, a pear of anguish lay in a glass case, its leaves fully opened to reveal the cruel mechanism within. Hannibal truly hoped, for the sake of the man who owned this house, that that implement had remained in the glass case the day Hannibal saw Will tortured.

An iron chair sat between two identical doors. Will shook his head when Hannibal looked askance — not the bedroom.

At the end of the hall, lit by a dim bulb like the most precious treasure, was the Judas Cradle. Will turned his head away from it and blinked rapidly to keep tears at bay.

“He’s the door just before that,” Will whispered. Hannibal nodded, stepping up to another disturbing display to free the length of chain from a stand beside the bannister before making his way to the indicated door.

He could kill a man quietly. Could approach on silent feet, grasp beneath the chin, behind the head and turn, twist, just once. He could. But this wasn’t a man they were facing, but a fiend. And one who deserved so much more than a quick and painless end.

Hannibal set his hand to the doorknob and opened the door. It slid silent over the rug beyond, offering a view of the large four-poster within, a dresser, a fireplace, a table…

Hannibal stepped in, chain coiled between his fists to hold it tense and quiet, and made his way to the bed first.

Richard was not a heavy sleeper, but Hannibal was twice his size, and there was no one in the manor to come running at the sound of his startled grunts of protest. Hannibal wrapped the chain around Richard’s throat, pulling it tight enough to constrict his breathing. Tight enough to rub a red mark round his throat that would match the one he’d left on Will.

“You’re going to be very still for me, aren’t you, my friend?” With no more reason to be silent, Hannibal’s voice seemed to echo in the cavernous room. Will had been kept here before, sometimes for days at a time. He knew all the secrets.

“What do you expect to get out of him?” Richard whispered hoarsely. “Money? Land? He has neither.”

“I haven’t come here to answer your questions about Will.”

The boy in question had crept forward hesitantly. As Hannibal watched, he pulled manacles free from the space between the bedframe and the mattress. They’d been welded clumsily to themselves, permanently attached to the wooden headboard. Wordlessly, Will held them out to Hannibal. They were old and worn, with brown stains smeared across the metal. Hannibal felt a new resurgence of anger.

“Hands out,” Hannibal told Richard, turning the chain in his hands when he refused, tightening it against his Adam's apple. With a growl, Richard held his wrists out as he’d been told. He did not often get *told* . And he was never *commanded* .

“Will,” Hannibal looked up at his boy. “Put them on him.”

“Don’t you fucking dare, you little shit.”

“He has no control over you,” Hannibal spoke quietly, eyes on Will as he hesitated. “He has no power over you anymore. He never had.”

Will still hesitated, but he stepped nearer after a moment and Richard bared his teeth, kicking out. Will didn't know what possessed him, he didn't know what broke through the panic, but instead of jumping back he leaned over and struck Richard across the face.

It was enough to shock both of them into stillness. Will moved first, shackling Richard with the implements thathad caused Will so much pain through the years.

"He is *nothing* ," Richard hissed, trying to break free once Hannibal let him go and moved out of reach. "He is a slut, a *whore* . Useless, pathetic, *weak* ."

"And not yours to look at ever again," Hannibal replied, grasping the man by his hair and pulling him far enough that his arms were stretched to their limit, legs kicking uselessly at the bedding.

"Will," Hannibal murmured, and Will looked at him as though in a trance. "What do you want to do to him?"

Will stared, eyes vacant. He wanted….he wanted everything. And nothing at all. He wanted to put Richard through every torture he'd been put through in the past three years. He wanted to leave him here and let him starve to death.

He'd done that to Will, once. Only for a day or so, but long enough for Will's throat to burn and his belly to grind away at itself. The thought picked at Will, tempting, seductive.

But there were other things. Quicker things. Humiliations Will had borne for years. Punishments he'd been given just that morning.

The wardrobe was organized as it always was. Clothes hung up, neat and tidy. Implements on a rack nailed to the door. Will had been bruised by the wooden paddle, reddened all over by the flogger. But what he'd felt against his skin most often hung on the opposite door, innocent and unassuming, as if Richard had not once split one in two against Will's backside.

"Here, Master." The distance had not yet gone from Will's eyes, but he seemed slightly more present when he spoke, his voice soft but not hesitant. He held the belt out with two hands, palms up like an offering. Rubbing his obedience in Richard's face.

Hannibal smiled at him, bringing a hand up to coax Will near with a curl of his fingers. When Will was near enough, Hannibal kissed him. It was adoring, soft, gentle. He smiled when Will pulled back.

"Hit him." Hannibal said. Will's eyes widened and he blinked, worried. Hannibal just tilted his head, his tone just as soft as he repeated his command. "Hit him, sweetling, as hard as you've always wanted to."

"Don't you dare."

"Sir —"

"Don't you *fucking* dare, you little shit, I will skin you alive."

Will struck him. Not hard, but enough to startle a curse from Richard. Then he hit him again. And then he didn't stop. The belt came down hard, over and over, against the front of Richard's thighs, over his stomach, his chest, his shoulders, across his face. Again and again until Will was crying, weak little sounds that grew to a yell of frustration.

"Will."

He stopped, shaking, the belt falling to the ground as he drew his hands through his hair and looked at what he had done. Welts were coming up red over Richard's skin. He was panting in pain and his expression was no longer as angry as it had been. Will had never hit him back, had never fought back, not until Richard had confronted him about Hannibal, not until he felt like there was something worth fighting back for.

"Jesus," he breathed. "Oh God."

"Beautiful boy," Hannibal praised him, still holding Richard pulled taut, limbs shaking now where they'd been beaten. "Do you want to say goodbye?"

Will stepped back, shaking his head. He was waiting for nausea. He was waiting for guilt, disgust, shame. None of those feelings surged up in him. He felt…relief. Relief and vindication and goddamn *pleasure* , and he *hated* it. He hated Richard for giving it to him.

"I'll find you," Richard spat at him. "Wherever you run, I'll hunt you down and *drag* you back here, and you'll never see the goddamn *sunlight* again. I'll keep you until you're used up, and then I'll watch you *hang — "*

Hannibal backhanded him, his eyes dark. "That's enough of that," he said, in the icy growl Will was coming to know well.

Will knew what Hannibal had come up here to do. He knew, and suddenly, it seemed wrong that *Hannibal* should have that right, when Will had taken every beating, every fuck, every scar. Every moment of Richard's anger, his jealousy, Will wore on his skin like a novel. He deserved the ending.

Richard still kept knives in the bedside drawer, though it had been a while since he'd used them on Will. He preferred torments that could go on forever, or which sank their claws into Will's psyche. Will moved faster than Hannibal could stop him, pulling the drawer open so quickly that he yanked it from the table entirely.

"Will —"

"You little *bitch* —"

Will's hand wrapped around a long, bone-handled knife that had left a scar over his hip bone. He spun, sinking it to the hilt in Richard's stomach.

For a moment, they stared at each other, both wide-eyed. "Will," Richard whispered, and he sounded like he had the first time he'd pulled Will close to whisper in his ear. "Will, baby, *please — "*

Will yanked the knife from his belly and drove it into his throat, just above the chains.

There was a gasp. A gurgle. Richard's eyes so wide, tears just brimming on the lower lid as Will had never seen, and for a moment he looked almost human.

That moment passed.

Will stepped away, tripped over the rug and landed hard, the knife skidding away across the floor. He was shaking. He was shaking, and when he tried to speak, all Will could do was laugh. First just a giggle, then something louder, then he was choking, air not filling his lungs, and the laughter became sobs, whimpers, hysteria.

He was sinking. He was unmoored. There was blood on his hands that was growing tacky, the smell of it was overwhelming, everything was overwhelming, he'd just killed a man, he'd just —

"Will," Hannibal's hand was warm, heavy, familiar against Will's hair, his lips pressed to his temple.

"I'm free," he breathed, tears still dropping from his eyes without Will's control. "I'm free, I can leave, I can *go* …"

"You are," Hannibal confirmed, "You *can* ." He pulled Will into his arms, rocking him slowly. "Although, if you would like me to come along, you will need to wait a moment for me to set the scene more subtly."

Will hiccuped, twisting his bloody fingers into Hannibal's clean shirt. "Why would I — Where would I go without you?"

"Will," Hannibal said gently, "You're free. Beholden to no Master. I would never dare to keep you if you wanted to leave."

"But I don't," Will said desperately, tilting his head up to shove his face into Hannibal's throat. "I don't, why would I — You said you were coming with me!"

"And I will," Hannibal assured him, drawing him that much closer, "But I wanted you to have the choice."

"I'm choosing you," Will promised. As the tremors in his body began to ease, and exhaustion took over, he set his teeth to Hannibal's throat. Just a light graze, not a true mark, but to Will, it was everything. "Come with me."

"I will," Hannibal promised, "Just rest, while I clean up."

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

> *His adult life, up until now, had belonged to someone else. Now, his 'Master' cared just as much for Will's joy as his own. In fact, Will often suspected Hannibal cared more for Will's happiness. And Will had so much of it, overflowing him until he found himself lost, surprised by his own pleasure.*

Chapter Notes

> Thank you so much for coming on this journey with Will and Hannibal, it's a happy ever after, just like we promised (and they deserve!)

Will flourished away from the grey and dull of a busy city. The Italian sun was good for him. Within the first week, as his bruises faded, his tan glowed golden on his skin. For the first few days, Will had just slept. He ate when Hannibal fed him, reached out for him, lay near, but he *rested* for the first time in many years.

No interruptions. No demands.

He had stayed in the bedroom as Hannibal cleaned away Richard's corpse and watched. He had stood when Hannibal guided him to and went with him. He listened, but didn't speak, when Hannibal explained their plan.

Hannibal would handle everything. Will trusted him to.

What he said or how he explained it, Will didn't know, and he didn't care. They had gotten out of the country without issue, they had settled into a house far too large for two in a country where Will didn't speak the language. They were safe.

And Will had never been hungrier.

His adult life, up until now, had belonged to someone else. Now, his 'Master' cared just as much for Will's joy as his own. In fact, Will often suspected Hannibal cared *more* for Will's happiness. And Will had so much of it, overflowing him until he found himself lost, surprised by his own pleasure.

He could do what he liked, here. He could touch himself, if he chose, alone and quiet in their bed or bath. He could crawl into Hannibal's lap late at night and beg prettily to be fucked to

tears. He could throw Hannibal's book aside and fuck *himself* to completion on Hannibal's cock, with only words of praise accompanying him.

If he so chose, he could bow before Hannibal and be completely obedient, the sweet slave he'd been trained to be, but with far more pleasure involved.

Hannibal handled his affairs from afar, sending letters off to Bedelia and his accountant. He often could spend hours writing, and while Will liked Bedelia, he was far more fond of having Hannibal's attention all to himself. Today was a writing day. Hannibal had a splotch of ink just above his collar, and Will found himself leaning in the doorway, just watching him.

"You've been at it for hours," he finally said, when Hannibal showed no signs of stopping.

"I'm sorry, darling. There've been some issues with our investments. Bedelia's certain she can handle it, but I wanted to give her as much assistance as I could."

Will sighed. Hannibal was endearingly practical, constantly on top of things. It was an admirable quality, but he was lonely. He crossed the room to Hannibal's side, dropping to his knees and blinking up at him through long eyelashes, his lips quirking down into a pout that had so far never once failed to get him what he wanted.

"Master, I've waited so long. I need you so badly. Don't you miss being inside of me?"

Hannibal looked over at his boy, a smile warming his eyes as they narrowed. He missed his boy every moment. He loved being near to him, loved tucking Will against his side when he read, when they spoke, when they dozed together. He had perhaps two more letters to write, but it was late in the day and he wouldn't have them sent out until the morning anyway. He could finish them once his boy was left satisfied.

"Are you needy, sweet boy?" Hannibal asked. "Have I been neglecting you?"

"No, Sir," Will licked his lips and pouted a little deeper. "I want to distract you. I want you to pay attention to me."

Hannibal's brow rose incrementally. With this freedom, Will had started to come into himself properly as a submissive. They did not have a cemented dynamic at home, there were rules that Hannibal had imposed for Will's comfort, but mostly he was given free reign.

And in that, he had discovered that he liked being a bratty thing.

"Not needy, then," Hannibal corrected. "Naughty."

Will wriggled, hands shifting on his lap and nodded. He never outright disobeyed Hannibal. There had never been a time that Hannibal had told him to do something that Will did not want to do. But once in a while, he liked to push. Once in a while he liked to play and be put in his place.

Hannibal deliberately set his pen down with a click and turned his chair to face Will properly. "It is very naughty to distract Master when he's working. You know this, sweet boy. You

know what happens when you're naughty."

Will dropped his lower lip and peered up at Hannibal with a practiced pout. "Are you going to punish me, Sir?"

Hannibal let his smile stretch, showing sharp teeth. A pleased shudder rippled through Will, and he tilted his head back to show off his tanned but very bare throat. He enjoyed the freedom of the market too much to be collared, after years in isolation, but it had been far too long since Hannibal last set his teeth to soft skin.

"I am. I can't have you running about thinking you can disobey whenever it suits you. Where would we be then?"

Will's smile tugged at the corner of his lips. "Pure chaos, no doubt," he said with a soft laugh. Hannibal ran his hand through Will's hair, cupping his nape and pulling him up off his knees. He nipped playfully at the corner of Will's mouth and then set him on his feet.

"Up to the bedroom, terrible thing, and put your clothes away. You'll earn them back, if you're good for me."

Will went with a spring in his step, a sense of pride and happiness that had not been present when they met. His naughtiness might one day be troublesome, but for now, it was a spark of joy in Hannibal's life. To see Will like this, sweet and eager and without a worry to his name, was worth every letter Hannibal had to write, every penny he had to pay to cement the idea that Richard had run away with Will, only for Will to leave him and return to claim his inheritance.

He followed Will a few moments later, allowing him to obey what he told him to do. They were still working on rebuilding memories, on wiping away what Richard had ruined for Will to make his submission enjoyable, to make his submission his power.

Upstairs, he found his boy sprawling in bed nude, looking at Hannibal over his shoulder with a grin before he ducked his head and pressed a sound into his arm. He wiggled a little, tilting his ass for Hannibal to look. They played often and safely. If it was intense, if it was painful, Will spent days recovering without retribution. Hannibal never pushed him beyond what Will could take.

Right then, his ass was wearing faded bruises but little else. Hannibal swallowed, eager to mark him up again.

"Are you ready to take your punishment, Will?"

Will squirmed more and shook his head, petulant and pretty. Hannibal stepped nearer and Will crawled further onto the bed, flipping over to look at Hannibal this way instead.

"What will you do, Sir?" He asked.

Hannibal leaned over him, wrapping a large hand around his small, thin wrist. He was finally thickening up as he should have in adulthood, but not fast enough for Hannibal's liking.

“First,” he murmured, taking Will’s other wrist and pressing them both above his head, “I’m going to bind you, if you insist on wriggling so.”

“Irons or silks?” Will asked, curiosity coloring his tone instead of fear. Hannibal hummed thoughtfully, bringing Will’s wrists up to his eyes to inspect.

“Irons,” he decided, with a kiss to each wrist. “You’ve healed enough from your last struggle. Will you be good, or will you mark yourself up again?”

“They’re *your* irons *,”* Will pointed out, “and *your* marks.”

“Mmm and you wear them with pride.”

“I do,” Will whispered, eyes bright, smile wide. “I do, Master. Mark me again?”

Hannibal hid a laugh against Will’s throat. “Lay back, lovely, arms above your head.”

Will obeyed.

End Notes

Metanoia - *Greek*
***(n.)* the journey of changing one's mind, heart, self, or way of life; a spiritual conversion.**

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